Robert J. Wieland

THE 1888 MESSAGE

An Introduction

Foreword By Donald K. Short

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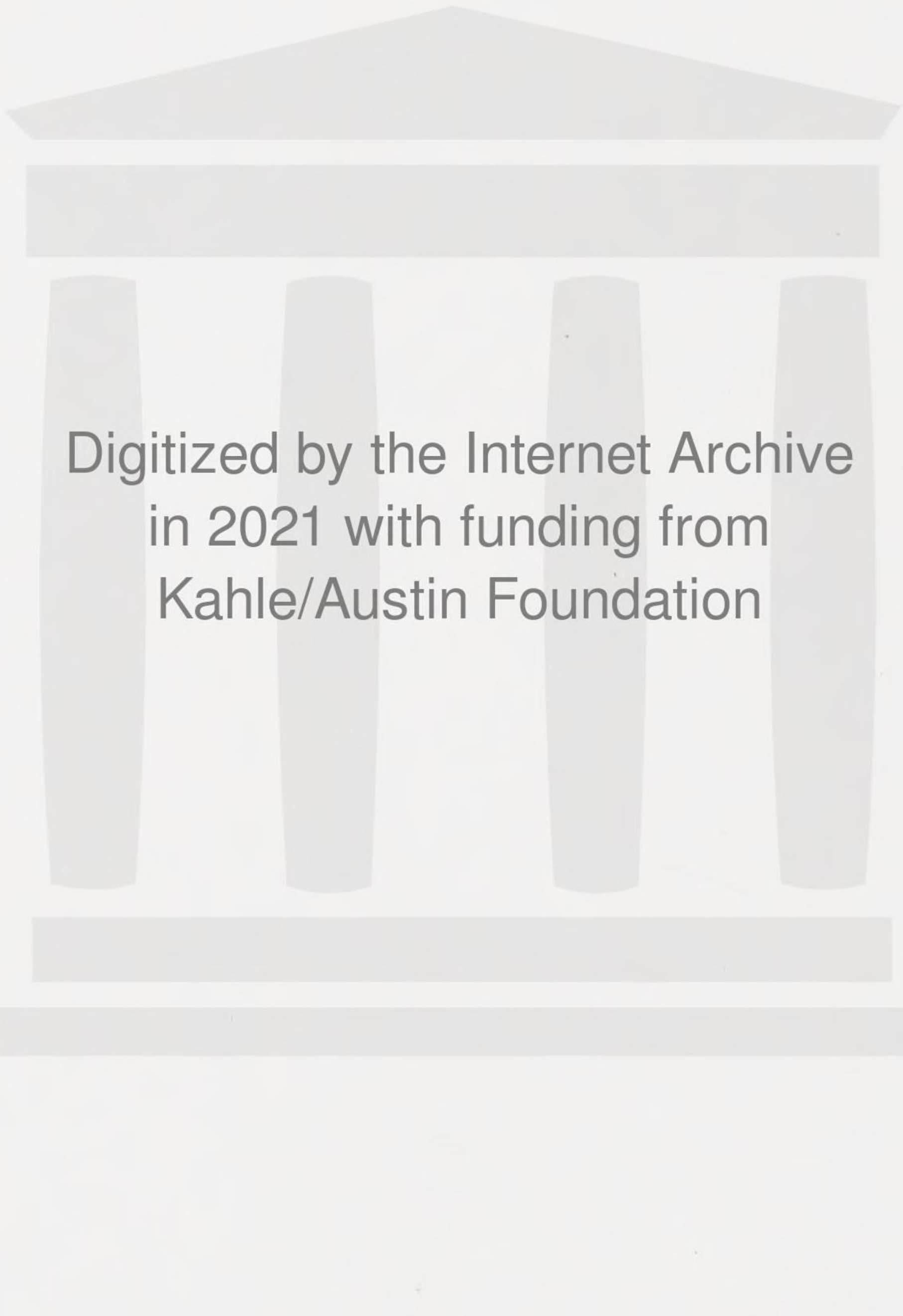

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Foreword By Donald K. Short

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The italic emphasis in this book is in the original unless otherwise noted.

Foreword

In *The 1888 Message* Robert J. Wieland brings into focus Seventh-day Adventist history, sets forth many deep spiritual insights, and ultimately provides the reason for the existence of the church. The book answers questions that truehearted church members are asking with increasing persistence—Why has time (and sin) continued decade after decade when we should have been in the kingdom? What has hindered the completion of the judgment work and the cleansing of the sanctuary? How much longer will the church talk about the latter rain before the blessing actually comes? Does God really call the church to a standard of sinless living?

The author has sought out and brought together the evidence, showing clearly that the Lord sent Seventh-day Adventists a message in 1888 that was unique and precious above all earthly values. It was a message to prepare His sons and daughters for victory in the final conflict between good and evil and for translation. The beauty, simplicity, and truth of the message that is to lighten the whole world are made clear in this book.

The reader will find here the good news, the glad tidings, the hope and encouragement, that will prepare the final generation to be "saints" who "keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12). The book also sets forth the supreme "business" of Christ—that of being Saviour! His grace is to keep mortals from responding to the

pressures of sin from within and from without. The author shows that the message of 1888 was not and is not just a "doctrine," but rather a living, vital experience having relevance in today's world of iniquity and corruption.

The book springs from many years of study, going back to the late 1930s. Subsequently the study was crystallized and in a unique way became the basis of an unpublished manuscript prepared in 1950. Now, after these many years, the mystery, haze, and in many cases, the total ignorance about the 1888 General Conference session are cleared away, and the entire church may have the blessings found in this publication. The message is based on the Bible, the divine insight and inspiration of Ellen White, and the historical printed record, along with unpublished letters and manuscripts that deal with the chief participants of the era, A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner.

The work is documented for the careful scholar, yet it will appeal to, interest, and edify a layman. The content makes it clear that Seventh-day Adventists have a distinct contribution to make to the world—a reason for existence that precludes them from being merely a church among many other churches. With all that the Lord has said through His messenger regarding the great blessing to be found in the 1888 message, it is certain that the church as a whole—in all its departments and among all its personnel, its ministry, and its laity—greatly needs the spiritual truths set forth in this book. To understand this and our history and its bearing on the final atonement is to sense the true meaning of God's call to Laodicea to repent.

May the Lord use the message found herein to bring into focus the spiritual perception required so that the "beginning of the latter rain and loud cry" of 1888 might come to fruition. Then the church will recognize the divine plan and give to the world the light that is to lighten the whole earth with its glory.

December, 1979

DONALD K. SHORT

To the Reader

There is need to define what this book means by "the 1888 message." And some readers will doubtless need a thumbnail sketch of the events that have come to be known by Seventh-day Adventists as "1888."

At the General Conference session held that year in Minneapolis, Minnesota, two young men (A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner) providentially conveyed to the delegates a message of justification by faith—a message that proved to be highly controversial. Many of the delegates, especially the older ministers and leaders, found the message (and/or the messengers) unwelcome.

A few rejoiced in the message and truly accepted it. Foremost among them was Ellen G. White. But no one seems to have thought the message important enough to take down in shorthand so that others could know firsthand what they said.

Hence, we really do not have the 1888 message itself in the exact words of the two young messengers at Minneapolis.

But this does not mean that we must despair of understanding what it was or that the title of this book is a misnomer. Certain facts make it possible for us to reconstruct a fair and reasonable concept of what they taught:

1. We know what Waggoner taught in the months immediately *before* the 1888 Conference.

2. We know what he taught in the months immediately *after*.

3. We know that Waggoner and Jones were in virtually perfect agreement in their understanding of righteousness by faith both at Minneapolis and for about a decade after 1888. There were two messengers, but Ellen White spoke repeatedly of what they taught as one message.

4. Ellen White's endorsements of their message are not confined to the lost utterances at Minneapolis. She continues to endorse their ongoing presentations for years after the 1888 Conference, through 1896 and even later.

5. We can find help in reconstructing their message in seeing how their contemporaries caught its essential ideas, both in opposition and acceptance. For example, W. W. Prescott and S. N. Haskell were among those who responded favorably and began to echo their concepts, as they understood they were Biblical and as Ellen White supported them.

Naturally we are not to understand that there was perfection or any degree of infallibility in what Jones and Waggoner said. Ellen White never called them prophets, but she did repeatedly speak of them in terms like these: "the Lord's messengers," "Christ's delegated messengers," "men divinely appointed," "servants of God . . . with a heaven-sent message," "men He has chosen," "young men [whom God sent] to bear a special message," "His chosen servants" "whom God is using," "the Lord [is] working through brethren Jones and Waggoner," "He has given them precious light," "if you accept the message, you accept Jesus," " 'messengers I [the Lord] sent to My people with light, with grace and power,' " "a message from God; it bears the divine credentials." Endorsements such as these continue through 1896 and occasionally later.

Therefore the 1888 message is understood in this book to be the essential and prominent ideas that were taught by Jones and Waggoner immediately before the 1888 Conference and in the decade following. Our method will be: (1) to keep as close to the 1888 date as possible; (2) to present what Jones and Waggoner taught with repetition or with strong emphasis; (3)

to present what they were manifestly in perfect agreement on; (4) to limit our presentation to their teachings where we find clear Ellen G. White (and of course Bible) support; and (5) to take into account as well how at least "some" of their contemporaries who believed received and understood the essentials of their message.

When we sometimes quote from Jones and Waggoner in later years (of necessity), it will be with careful scrutiny and selectivity to be certain that the ideas presented are in harmony with their earlier teachings, and with the five principles mentioned above. If anyone should object that quotations after 1888 are not the 1888 message, the answer is that Ellen White's continuing support for years thereafter and her emphasis on the importance of the ongoing message must be very significant. And the complete, balanced picture of what they taught in the decade after Minneapolis must be a fair understanding of what was *implicit* in the message given in 1888. Hopefully, reasonable common sense will give us a pretty clear picture.

It is impossible that Ellen White could have continued her repeated and enthusiastic endorsements so long if she had had an inkling that either one or both of the "messengers" had departed from the true faith. She was an inspired prophet with sanctified, penetrating insight; her credibility as such is intertwined with the message of Jones and Waggoner. Never in her long career did she endorse anyone's contemporary message so heartily or persistently. It must be unthinkable that she was misinformed, naive, or mistaken.

Further, there is something even more important than Ellen White's crucial support in evaluating the message of Jones and Waggoner. The ultimate test of truth is the Bible itself. It is this author's conviction that they derived their concepts from their own firsthand study of the Scriptures in the light of the "great controversy" motif of Seventh-day Adventists and our unique idea of the cleansing of the sanctuary and the three angels' messages. As with all of us,

they were indebted to all who went before them, including Luther, Calvin, and Wesley; but they validated their message from Scripture alone. They saw the truth of justification by faith from a new and fresh perspective, that of the eschatological understanding inherent in the Advent movement. In recent years it is becoming increasingly evident that there is solid Biblical support for their essential concepts; support of their interpretation of Scripture is found in various competent theological studies of our day. For example, a recent doctoral dissertation for the University of London presents evidence that their view of the nature of Christ was held by a significant number of respected theologians and reformers through the Christian age (Harry Johnson, *The Humanity of the Saviour*, London: The Epworth Press, 1962).

It is my prayer that your heart response to the message will be what Ellen White's was when she heard it for the first time personally at the conference in Minneapolis: "Every fiber of my heart said Amen" (Manuscript 5, 1889). That has been my response also, ever since I first understood it!

Chapter 1

There Must Be a Reason!

"What has gone wrong?" asks the devout orthodox Jew in his anguish and bewilderment.

Even today as he pores over the ancient predictions the Lord made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, he is sincerely perplexed. "When will the God of our fathers awake and fulfill His long-delayed promises to send the Messiah to Israel? When will He make Jerusalem the joy of the whole earth? Or have our grand Messianic hopes been only in vain?"

Those fortunate enough to get close to the Jews' one remaining holy place in Jerusalem gather at the ancient Wailing Wall at the southwest corner of the old temple site. There they pour out their complaints and entreaties to the God of their patriarchs.

We would like to tap them on the shoulder and say, "Friends, you may stop your wailing! The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob has not been asleep or uncaring. He *has* kept His promise. He *did* faithfully send the Messiah—in Jesus of Nazareth! The only problem is that your ancestors, failing to recognize Him when He came, crucified Him."

Could it be that devout Seventh-day Adventists also have their own version of the Wailing Wall?

Ponder the never-ending stream of appeals and calls to prayer that come in the annual Week of Prayer readings, the camp-meeting sermons, the General Conference sessions, and Annual Councils, calling on the faithful to pray that the

Lord will keep His promise and open the windows of heaven to pour upon His people the refreshing showers of the latter rain. Ever since Ellen White described what she saw in her May 14, 1851, vision concerning the "refreshing" of the "latter rain" (*Early Writings,* p. 71), Seventh-day Adventists have cherished the hope that some day God would grant the blessing and bring the world task of witnessing to a triumphant close.

The latter rain would consist, they understood, of an ultimate gift of the Holy Spirit to ripen the gospel grain for the harvest, even as the rains preceding harvest in ancient Palestine prepared for the fulfillment of the farmers' dreams. The latter rain would lead into the loud cry of the third angel's message and the final glorious enlightening of the world. And then the Lord could come in power and great glory!

Why haven't these pleading petitions of over a century been answered? Why does every round of appointed convocations leave the same nagging frustration of no latter rain?

These are questions that thoughtful people ask, especially youth. Why consecrate oneself to a life of sacrificial toil if the eschatological hopes that nourished the pioneers seem so remote? Obviously, the second coming of Christ cannot take place until these grand events so long expected occur. But for many Adventists in many lands the Second Advent fades further into the shadows of uncertainty. Like the devout Jews wailing for the coming of their Messiah, it's a matter of hoping against hope that the fathers weren't really mistaken after all. Actually, the honor of the God of the pioneers is involved. *Is He faithful? Is He even alive?*

Surely some heavenly beings would like to tap *us* on the shoulder and say, "Stop your mourning for unanswered prayers! Your pleadings of 130 years *have* been answered—the Lord *has* kept His promise to the pioneers. He has *already* given the beginning of the latter rain and the loud cry. The only difficulty is that your fathers failed to recognize the heavenly gift when it was bestowed, and they rejected it

precisely as did the Jews in rejecting their Messiah two thousand years ago."

Such news would be as startling to most Seventh-day Adventists today as our proposed announcement to the Jews at the Wailing Wall would be to them. *But it is true.*

A single tenuous disclosure of such tremendous news appears in the *Index to the Writings of Ellen G. White,* Vol. 2, page 1581, under the heading "Loud cry," much as a slender crack in the earth at Qumran led to the discovery of fabulous manuscript riches in a hidden cave. The simple entry reads, "Loud cry . . . already begun in revelation of Christ's righteous- ness." Following up the lead, we turn to the statement cited:

> The time of test is just upon us, for the loud cry of the third angel has *already* begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer. This is the beginning of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth (*Selected Messages,* Book One, p. 363, emphasis supplied).

This is no mere statement of an obscure, temporary blessing given at some time in our past history; this is an astounding declaration that the bright eschatological promises cherished by the Advent pioneers ever since 1851 were at some time fulfilled, at least the "beginning" of them.

When and why did Ellen G. White make such a significant declaration?

The original source of the statement is a *Review and Herald* article of November 22, 1892. "The revelation of the righteousness of Christ" is a clear reference to the message of 1888, by then four years along in its baffling course of history among us. After due reflection, a courageous Ellen White was ready at that time to label the message as the "beginning" of the final outpouring of the Holy Spirit that would lead into the enlightening of the earth with the glory of the fourth angel of Revelation 18.

But this statement raises some uncomfortable problems. If the inspired messenger had the insight to discern the real

significance of the 1888 message, why has nearly a century dragged on since? Three brief years before the 1888 message began to sound, Ellen White declared that when the latter rain and the loud cry should at last begin, "the work will spread like fire in the stubble" (*Selected Messages,* Book One, p. 118). Indeed, "the final movements will be rapid ones" (*Testimonies for the Church,* Vol. 9, p. 11). Yet painfully slow progress has been made since 1892, when her startling announcement was made. People on Planet Earth are being born faster than we can reach them with the message we have to bear. Each passing year leaves us with a bigger witnessing task to complete.

A laissez-faire unconcern may rationalize denominational pride into assumptions of great progress "on schedule"; but most candid Seventh-day Adventists confess a sober conviction that the world is simply not yet enlightened by the glory of that "other angel's" message.

What has gone wrong?

Four years after the 1892 statement Ellen White frankly pinpointed what happened. For a clear reason, an era of bright hope drew to a close:

> An unwillingness to yield up preconceived opinions, and to accept this truth [the law in Galatians is especially the moral law], lay at the foundation of a large share of the opposition manifested at Minneapolis [1888] against the Lord's message through Brethren [E. J.] Waggoner and [A. T.] Jones. By exciting that opposition Satan succeeded in shutting away from our people, in a great measure, the special power of the Holy Spirit that God longed to impart to them. The enemy prevented them from obtaining that efficiency which might have been theirs in carrying the truth to the world, as the apostles proclaimed it after the day of Pentecost. The light that is to lighten the whole earth with its glory was resisted, and by the action of our own brethren has been in a great degree kept away from the world (*Selected Messages,* Book One, pp. 234, 235).

Let us analyze this statement that was made in 1896:

1. "The special power of the Holy Spirit" that God wanted

to impart to our brethren in 1888 was truly Pentecostal in its dynamic scope.

2. The message would have provided "efficiency" in carrying the Seventh-day Adventist truths "to the world," obviously including the Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, and pagan portions of the world. It would have enabled the fledgling Adventist Church, weak in numbers and material resources, to have enjoyed the kind of success the early apostles experienced, "conquering, and to conquer" (Revelation 6:2). Clearly, there was power in the message itself.

3. The light brought by A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner was a fulfillment of the prophecy of the initial coming of that mighty fourth angel of Revelation 18, which light "is to lighten the whole earth with its glory." This is the Biblical source of the phrase "the loud cry" (Revelation 18:2; 14:9).

4. "In a great measure" and to "a great degree" "Satan succeeded" in preventing our people from receiving the light, and he kept it away from the world. This simple fact accounts for the nearly a century of spiritual barrenness that has come over our world-mission task, including the loss of our work in China and increasing frustration and spiritual impotence in many other areas. If the latter rain is spiritual moisture, the lack of it must constitute spiritual drought!

5. The agents whom Satan employed to accomplish his purpose were "our own brethren," whose attitude was "action" of resistance and rejection. In all fairness it should be recognized that "our own brethren" were primarily the general and local conference leadership of the day, acting in behalf of the church as did the Jewish leaders who acted in behalf of their nation in rejecting their long-awaited Messiah.

How to handle these disturbing realities is a problem that has occupied decades of perplexity. To suppress evidence or evade obvious truth is no way to find a solution to our difficulties. It can never satisfy inquiring minds.

For many centuries the Jews have had a similar problem, trying to explain to their children why the long-promised

Messiah has not appeared. It has been embarrassing. When Joseph Wolff earnestly begged his father to explain who the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 was, if not Christ, his father sternly forbade him ever to ask the question again. The only safe course for us is to *welcome* the full disclosure of the truth! The church will never be motivated to finish the world gospel task unless it understands exactly why the coming of the Lord has been so long delayed and renews the eschatological confidence of the pioneers.

To be sure, a long list of involved and depressing reasons for the delay can be compiled.* But the simple solution to all of them was to have been provided in the truly Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain of 1888. Therefore the rejection of that inspired solution for our many problems constitutes the *one* basic cause of the long delay, and it merits the special attention of this generation. Likewise the one basic problem that has afflicted the Jews of the past two thousand years is their rejection of the Messiah.

The comparison of our rejection of light in 1888 to the Jews' rejection of Christ is not farfetched. From the time of the 1888 Conference itself and for years that followed, Ellen White seemed to be occupied with the idea that we were reenacting the tragedy of the ancient Jews' unbelief:

> When I have been made to pass over the history of the Jewish nation and have seen where they stumbled because they did not walk in the light, I have been led to realize where we as a people would be led if we refuse the light God would give us. Eyes have ye but ye see not; ears, but ye hear not. Now, brethren, light has come to us and we want to be where we can grasp it. . . . I see your danger and I want to warn you. . . .
>
> If the ministers will not receive the light [spoken at the

*L. E. Froom in *Movement of Destiny* devotes two long chapters, called Nos. 1 and 2, to "Second Advent Delayed; Divine Reasons Disclosed" (pp. 561-603). The impact can be confusing and discouraging. The one simple solution to all the problems that have delayed Christ's coming is *faith*—true, genuine, complete faith *in Christ*. This lack the 1888 message was intended to supply.

> 1888 Conference itself], I want to give the people a chance; perhaps they may receive it. . . . Just like the Jewish nation (Manuscript 9, 1888; talk given October 24, 1888; A. V. Olson, *Through Crisis to Victory*, p. 292).

Eight days later she repeats the theme:

> When the Jews took the first step in the rejection of Christ, they took a dangerous step. When afterward evidence accumulated that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, they were too proud to acknowledge that they had erred. . . . Just like the Jews, they [the brethren] take it for granted they have all the truth, and feel a sort of contempt for anyone who should suppose they had more correct ideas than themselves of what is truth. All the evidence produced they decide shall not weigh a straw with them, and they tell others that the doctrine is not true, and afterward, when they see as light[,] evidence they were so forward to condemn, they have too much pride to say "I was wrong"; they still cherish doubt and unbelief, and are too proud to acknowledge their convictions. . . .
>
> It is not wise for one of these young men [Jones or Waggoner] to commit himself to a decision at this meeting, where opposition, rather than investigation, is the order of the day (Manuscript 95, 1888; talk given November 1, 1888; Olson, *op. cit.*, pp. 300, 301).

By 1890 Ellen White is taking the case of "just like the Jews" to the people:

> Those to whom Christ has entrusted great light, whom he has surrounded with precious opportunities, are in danger, if they do not walk in this light, of being filled with pride of opinion and with self-exaltation as were the Jews (*Review and Herald*, February 4, 1890).
>
> We should not be found quibbling, and putting up hooks on which to hang our doubts in regard to the light which God sends us. When a point of doctrine that you do not understand comes to your attention, go to God on your knees, that you may understand what is truth, and not be found, as were the Jews, fighting against God. . . .
>
> For nearly two years we have been urging the people to come up and accept the light and the truth concerning the righteousness of Christ, and they do not know whether to

> come and take hold of this precious truth or not (*ibid.*, March 11, 1890).
>
> How long will those at the head of the work keep themselves aloof from the message of God? (*ibid.*, March 18, 1890).

If we could say something to help the Jews at the Wailing Wall, we would urge them to study firsthand the extant records concerning Jesus of Nazareth, that they might see in Him the fulfillment of the prophecies they are vainly waiting for in the future.

It would also be wise for us to study firsthand the extant records of the content of the 1888 message itself and permit its glorious light to shine into our hearts today. The 1888 message as proclaimed by the original heaven-sent messengers abounds in mind-stretching concepts that are almost wholly unknown to this present generation. Once we have done our homework well and thoroughly understand what was the beginning of the latter rain and the loud cry, we will be better prepared to understand the present, avoid counterfeits and deception, and to face the future with a healing message for mankind that will hasten the return of our Lord.

This is what this book is all about.

Chapter 2

The True Outpouring of the Holy Spirit

Sometimes students in school have the disconcerting experience of studying for a final examination only to find that their test consists of just one question. But that one question is so probing and comprehensive that it strains their capabilities.

It could well be that the final test administered to God's people will consist of one question: How do you recognize the true outpouring of the Holy Spirit? It may be possible they will be confronted by two demonstrations side by side, one the genuine Holy Spirit and the other an extremely clever counterfeit. The one "test question" would be: *Tell which is which.*

Before the 1888 beginning of the latter rain, Ellen White had already declared that we will have to meet very close counterfeits of the Holy Spirit. Our choice of which is which can determine our eternal destiny:

> Before the final visitation of God's judgments upon the earth there will be among the people of the Lord such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times. The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His children. . . . The enemy of souls desires to hinder this work; and before the time for such a movement shall come, he will endeavor to prevent it by introducing a counterfeit. In those churches which he can bring under his deceptive power he will make it appear that God's special blessing is poured out; there will be manifest what is thought to be great religious interest. Multitudes

> will exult that God is working marvelously for them, when the work is that of another spirit (*The Great Controversy*, p. 464).

This statement appears in a chapter entitled "Modern Revivals," which exposes many of the false ideas that were popular among revivalists in the latter part of the nineteenth century. No such counterfeit could possibly deceive anyone who has a true understanding of "righteousness by faith." But there was much confusion in the nineteenth century; and there is even more today. The subjectivism of the modern "Pentecostal" movements had its roots in pre-1888 revival movements that swept through the popular churches.

The modern Pentecostal movement has made valiant efforts to capture the Seventh-day Adventist Church. One example can be cited:

> A breath of cleansing, refreshing, invigorating air is blowing across the Christian church today. Every denomination, at some point, is feeling the effects of this breeze. . . .
>
> This Charismatic Revival, or Renewal, as it has been known, is of God. It was started by God—is being furthered by God—is empowered by the Holy Spirit to the glory of God. The Holy Spirit is again manifesting Himself with the same power and the same gifts as characterized the apostolic age (*Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship Voice*, March, 1967).

A Seventh-day Adventist member tells his story as reported in *Insight:*

> For two years I looked forward to this . . . wonderful experience of the baptism, . . . and I couldn't find it in my own church. . . . We didn't want everything that God had for us—you know . . . speaking in tongues. But I wanted what God wanted to give me. And I searched for this. God made me break down the barriers of denominationalism, and I went to other places, and eventually, on Easter Sunday, March 29, 1970, God poured out His Spirit into me and gave me the wonderful evidence He promised—the Spirit

> gave them utterance—and as the Spirit gave me utterance, I sang in the beautiful language of heaven."

The author of the article in which this statement was quoted continues to tell the circumstances. Seventh-day Adventists were to be "converted":

> The only thing unusual about this testimony is that it was given by a Seventh-day Adventist. He was in Riverside, California, in the spring of 1972, at a meeting of that city's chapter of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International. The meeting began with praise to God for signs and wonders. It ended with a plan to bring the baptism of the Holy Spirit, including the gift of tongues, to the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
>
> The businessmen present pledged $2,500 to send their organization's publication, the *Voice,* to Adventist ministers around the world. It is a publication that majors in miracles —accounts of healings, unknown tongues, prophetic revelations, all those phenomena characteristic of the charismatic movement (*Insight,* May 15, 1973, pp. 13, 14).

If this "Holy Spirit" was a counterfeit, where is the genuine? There must be a genuine somewhere, for we have these divine promises:

> It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; . . . and it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved (Acts 2:17-21).
>
> And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen. . . . And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues (Revelation 18:1-4).

Over fifty years ago a former General Conference president confessed that he recognized the initial fulfillment of the

prophecy of that "fourth angel" in the 1888 message:

> In 1888 there came to the Seventh-day Adventist Church a very definite awakening message. It was designated at the time as "the message of Righteousness by Faith." Both the message itself and the manner of its coming made a deep and lasting impression upon the minds of ministers and people, and the lapse of time has not erased that impression from memory. To this day, many of those who heard the message when it came are deeply interested in it and concerned regarding it. All these long years they have held a firm conviction, and cherished a fond hope, that some day this message would be given great prominence among us, and that it would do the cleansing, regenerating work in the church which they believed it was sent by the Lord to accomplish (A. G. Daniells, *Christ Our Righteousness*, p. 23).

Elder Daniells felt constrained to add: "The message has never been received, nor proclaimed, nor given free course as it should have been in order to convey to the church the measureless blessings that were wrapped within it" (*ibid.*, p. 47). Denominational publications demonstrate the truth of this statement. Except for concepts implicit in spirit of prophecy writings, research indicates that for decades before and after 1926 the 1888 message itself has been as lost and buried as Pompeii beneath old Vesuvius' ashes. We may have much so-called righteousness by faith, but it is a far cry from the light that the Lord gave this people in the 1888 message. And not only has the charismatic movement made attempts to seduce the remnant church through an extremely subjective "gospel"; but the opposite extreme of a purely objective Calvinist "gospel" has exploited our widespread ignorance of the content of the 1888 message.

Ellen White encouraged the church to believe that the true outpouring of the Holy Spirit came in that 1888 message:

> The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety;

> it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. . . . It is the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure (*Testimonies to Ministers* [1895], pp. 91, 92).

It was the general conviction of those close to Ellen White that the latter rain had begun. Here is one example (A. T. Jones speaking):

> I received a letter á little while ago from Brother [G. B.] Starr in Australia. I will read two or three sentences because they come in well just at this place in our lessons:—"Sister White says that we have been in the time of the latter rain since the [1888] Minneapolis meeting" (*General Conference Bulletin,* 1893, p. 377).

Two years earlier E. J. Waggoner had confessed:

> When we have strong faith that Christ is abiding in us, we can go forth to work for others with power, and join our voices with those of the angels in heaven, and then the message will go with a loud cry. . . . I rejoice tonight in the belief that the loud cry is now beginning (*ibid.,* 1891, pp. 245, 246).

Here is the recorded confession of the congregation assembled at the 1893 General Conference session. A. T. Jones is asking questions, and the congregation is responding:

> Now brethren, when did that message of the righteousness of Christ, begin with us as a people? [One or two in the audience: "Three or four years ago."] Which was it, three? or four? [Congregation: "Four."] Yes, four. Where was it? [Congregation: "Minneapolis."] What then did the brethren reject at Minneapolis? [Some in the congregation: "The loud cry."] What is that message of righteousness? The Testimony has told us what it is; the loud cry—the latter rain. Then what did the brethren in that fearful position in which they stood, reject at Minneapolis? They rejected the latter rain—the loud cry of the third angel's message (*ibid.,* 1893, p. 183).

Let us in imagination join the congregation that night as they listen in hushed attention:

> And, brethren, the time has come to take up to-night what we there rejected. Not a soul of us has ever been able to dream yet the wonderful blessing that God had for us at Minneapolis, and which we would have been enjoying these four years, if hearts had been ready to receive the message which God sent. We would have been four years ahead, we would have been in the midst of the wonders of the loud cry itself, to-night. Did not the Spirit of prophecy tell us there at that time that the blessing was hanging over our heads? *(ibid.)*.

The General Conference president, O. A. Olsen, was moved by this presentation. The next day he bared his soul to the assembled delegates:

> This place is becoming more and more solemn on account of the presence of God. I presume that none of us have ever before been in quite such a meeting as we are having at this time. The Lord is certainly coming very near, and is revealing things more and more, things which we have not heretofore so fully appreciated nor understood. . . .
>
> I felt very solemn last evening. To me the place was terrible on account of God's nearness, on account of the solemn testimony that was borne to us here. . . .
>
> Some may feel tried over the idea that Minneapolis is referred to. I know that some have felt grieved and tried over any allusion to that meeting, and to the situation there. But let it be borne in mind that the reason why anyone should feel so is an unyielding spirit on his part. . . . The very idea that one is grieved, shows at once the seed of rebellion in the heart (*ibid.*, p. 188).

Another of the prominent speakers in 1893 who at least partially recognized what was happening was W. W. Prescott:

> Now when I think that for four years we have been in the time of the latter rain, and that God has wanted to pour out his Spirit that these gifts might be restored, that his work might go with power; and that he wishes us to join gladly in the work and co-operate with him with the whole heart, it occurs to me that we have been the hands that have been

> holding on and the feet that wouldn't go; and rather than tear the whole body to pieces the body has waited (*ibid.*, p. 463).

This expectation of the impending latter rain leaps at one continually from the brittle old pages of the 1893 *Bulletin*. Never since the glorious days of the midnight cry of 1844 had the hearts of God's people throbbed with such an eschatological hope!

> Then when that message of God's righteousness—the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, God's right doing—when that is received and is allowed to be carried on, and is held by his people, what does that mean about the work of God on earth?—It will be but a *short* time until the whole thing is done. . . .
>
> Now is the time that the work will be closed up shortly, and we are in the midst of the scenes that close up this world's history . . . but the latter rain is the teaching of righteousness. When did that message of the righteousness of God, as such, come to us as a people? [Congregation:—"Four years ago."] Where? [Congregation: "At Minneapolis."] . . .
>
> Now, that message of the righteousness of Christ is the loud cry. It is the latter rain (*ibid.*, p. 243).

Wouldn't the congregation that night have been astounded to know that at least the greater part of another century must roll by before God's gracious call would be heeded? Many books have been written since then on Seventh-day Adventist history. Strangely, none have disclosed this real significance of the 1888 message and history with the exception of L. E. Froom's *Movement of Destiny*, published in 1971. Froom courageously identifies the 1888 message as the *beginning* of the latter rain:

> There was thus, in the nineties, not only an exposition but a manifestation of the power of Righteousness by Faith that was an earnest of the power of the crowning Loud Cry climax destined to come, samplings of which were then

given. Mrs. White expressly stated that what was taking place was actually the beginning of the Latter Rain (p. 345).

The message at Minneapolis became most precious to the heart of [F. H.] Westphal. It was "sweet music to my soul," he declared. He went back to Plainfield, Wisconsin, and told the church that the Latter Rain had started. As a result, one farmer sold his farm, put much of his money into the Lord's work, took up canvassing, and was finally ordained to the ministry (p. 262).

He who denies that the Loud Cry began to sound in 1888 impugns the veracity of the Spirit of Prophecy. He who asserts the Latter Rain did not then begin to fall challenges the integrity of God's message relayed to us (p. 667).

As all students of these backgrounds are aware, these truths of 1888 have not yet come to their full tide, as we are told that they must and will before and as we enter upon the final phase of our witness to the world. They will yet definitely become the throbbing, all-pervasive heart of our final presentation to the world. The "final movements" will be "rapid ones"—Spirit-filled, Christ-centered, full-message, Righteousness-by-Faith-surcharged movements. . . . The glorious truths of 1888 will triumph (p. 521).

"The blessed hope" that sustained the Advent pioneers was the hope of seeing Jesus personally at His return and being translated without dying. The 1888 message rekindled this hope of translation. A. T. Jones had been quoting *Testimonies,* Vol. 1, p. 187, which says, "Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, have heeded the counsel of the True Witness, and they will receive the latter rain, and thus be fitted for translation." Now for the clincher:

> Brethren, that is where we are. Let us act like it. Let us thank the Lord that he is dealing with us still, to save us from our errors, to save us from our dangers, to keep us back from wrong courses, and to pour upon us the latter rain, that we may be translated. That is what the message means—translation—to you and me (*General Conference Bulletin,* 1893, p. 185).

A few days later they were back again on the same topic:

> Brethren, is there not a lot of good cheer in the thought that . . . the latter rain is to prepare for translation? Now, where is the latter rain to fall, and when does it? Now is the time for the latter rain: and when is the time for the loud cry? [Voice: "Now."] What is it to prepare us for? [Voice: "For translation."] It brings good cheer to me that the tests that the Lord is giving us now, are to fit us for translation. And when he comes and speaks to you and me, it is because he wants to translate us, but he cannot translate sin, can he? Then, the only purpose that he has in showing us the depth and breadth of sin, is that he may save us from it and translate us. Then, shall we become discouraged when he shows us our sins? No; let us thank him that he wants to translate us, and he wants to do this so much that he wishes to get our sins out of the way as soon as possible (*ibid.*, p. 205).

Closely linked with the thought of preparation for translation was a clearer appreciation of the health-reform message:

> Now another thing right there. We are living in view of another fearful fact, that is, if that message which we are now to give, is not received, it has attached to it the fearful consequences that the wine of the wrath of God will be received. . . . And the work which is to bring all face to face with that fact, as it is there recorded, is now begun. Therefore, *will not that give a power to the health reform that it has not yet had?* When the health reform was given to the people of God, it was defined as that which is to fit the people for translation. . . . But we have to go through the seven last plagues before we are translated; and if a man's blood is impure and full of gross material will he be able to pass through that time, when the air is sick with pestilence? Indeed he cannot (A. T. Jones, *ibid.*, pp. 88, 89).

An event of national importance also conspired to make the 1888 era one of almost breathtaking significance. Seventh-day Adventists had always believed that virtually simultaneous with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain will come the national Sunday law prefigured in the mark of the beast prophecies. In two centuries of national history, the American Congress has never come so close to

passing a national Sunday law as during the height of the 1888 interest in righteousness by faith. "In 1888 Senator H. W. Blair of New Hampshire introduced a Sunday bill into the United States Congress enforcing Sunday in all Federal territories as a 'day of worship,' also a religious-education amendment to the Constitution" (*Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia,* revised edition, p. 1437). Just after the 1888 General Conference session in Minneapolis, Ellen G. White wrote:

> We see that efforts are being made to restrict our religious liberties. The Sunday question is now assuming large proportions. An amendment to our Constitution is being urged in Congress, and when it is obtained, oppression must follow (*Review and Herald,* December 18, 1888).

Hardly had A. T. Jones finished his duties at the 1888 General Conference session than he was called to Washington, D.C., to make a presentation before the United States Senate Committee on Education and Labor, December 13, 1888 (cf. "The National Sunday Law, Argument of A. T. Jones," Oakland, California, *American Sentinel,* 1890). Jones's success in opposing Blair's Sunday bill naturally made his righteousness by faith presentations more prominent. Further agitation for the Sunday closing of the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago created a tense climate for the delegates to the General Conference session of that year:

> To begin with and to lay the foundation for what is to come, we will look at the situation as it exists to-night before us in the United States government. And for this reason I shall relate the experiences of the hearing that took place lately in Washington (*Bulletin,* p. 39).
>
> When they [Congress] put that restriction there, and said that the directors should sign an agreement to close the World's Fair on Sunday, on the "Christian Sabbath," as Congress declared Sunday to be, before they could receive any money; they had just as much right to say that the World's Fair directory should sign an agreement to submit to Christian baptism before they could receive any of the appropriation. . . .

> If Congress can define what the Christian Sabbath is, they can require anything else in the Christian religion (*ibid.*, p. 50).
>
> These are some of the things that are taking place before us. Now the study will be what is soon to come upon us from what is now taking place before us. When we see that, as the testimony has said, we will see the necessity, recognize the necessity, that the Holy Spirit shall be recognized, received, presented to the people. And that is where we are, brethren, as Brother Prescott has said. The only question is, Shall we seek God for the power of his Holy Spirit? (*ibid.*, p. 52).

Those of our people who were alert were deeply stirred, as well they might be. Congress had declared that "the Christian Sabbath" is Sunday. Clergymen were declaring themselves ready to trample upon the convictions of Sabbathkeepers. Our people kept thinking of these familiar words: "It is time for thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void thy law" (Psalm 119:126). Elder Jones made a powerful appeal:

> Then is not that word the prayer that God has put into our mouths at this time? . . . Are you living day by day . . . in the presence of that terrible fact that it is time for God himself to work, if his integrity is going to be maintained to all the world? . . . It brings us to the point of such consecration as not a soul of us ever dreamed of before; unto the place of such consecration, of such devotion, as will hold ourselves in the presence of God, with that fearful thought that "It is time for thee, Lord, to work, for they have made void thy law" (*ibid.*, p. 73).

Righteousness by faith is meaningless unless it motivates to sacrificial consecration and service. The Jones and Waggoner message was practical and effective in that it demanded and motivated to complete devotion:

> We are to warn the people of the world against this power [the beast and its image] . . . and to draw them away from it unto God. Now can I do that with any force at all, if I have any connection with the world or worldliness? [Congregation, "No."] If I may partake of a worldly spirit, and a worldly disposition and inclination, I want to know how I

> am going to warn the people to separate from the world utterly? How is there going to be enough force in my words to get anybody to do it? . . . I do not care whether you are a minister or not, if you are only a Seventh-day Adventist, or even only a *professed* Seventh-day Adventist, . . . I want to know how you are going to make that profession worth anything, or have any power at all upon people of this world, if you are in any way connected with this world in spirit, in mind, in thought, in wishes, in inclinations? No sir; a hair's breadth, a connection with the world as thin as a hair, will rob you of the power that there must be in this call that will warn the world against this evil power of the world, so that they shall be utterly separated from it (*ibid.*, p. 123).

The message matched the crisis. In bold, simple words the messengers called for the ultimate measure of consecration to the Lord:

> That is a splendid picture that Brother Porter read awhile ago; that the prophet looked for those who give this message, but looked *too low*. Said the angel, "Look higher." Thank the Lord, they are above the world. That is where they belong. Above the world, upon a foundation which God has established for them to walk upon. And every one who is down so low that any one has to look to the world to see them—such as these cannot give the third angel's message. We are to be above the world. Then cut loose, brethren *(ibid.)*.

Appeals such as the following were what led a farmer of Plainfield, Wisconsin, to sell his farm and enter the Lord's work:

> Brethren, it is the worst thing that can happen to a Seventh-day Adventist who has means, when God has to pass him by and find somebody else that will give what is wanted. A Seventh-day Adventist left to himself, is the worst-off man in this world. We have come to a place where God wants us to use all we have. And when we believe this our means and ourselves will be for his use. And his work will soon be done, and then we shall not need any more means. That is the situation now (*ibid.*, p. 111; cf. Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, p. 262).

Not since the midnight cry of 1844 had human hearts been so deeply stirred. The latter rain and the loud cry had begun! No wonder the General Conference president had said, "This place is becoming more and more solemn on account of the presence of God. I presume that none of us have ever before been in quite such a meeting as we are having at this time." How would you have felt to be listening to these words:

> It is time for the third angel's message to reach every nation on the globe. . . .
>
> Well then are you ready to go? That being the message that is to go, does it not become every professor of that message to hold himself in readiness to go to the ends of the earth, when God calls him to go? . . . Then every man is unfaithful to the trust which God has given us in the third angel's message, if he holds himself back from the call of God to go anywhere on the globe, isn't he? Then that brings us again face to face with such a consecration as there has never been among Seventh-day Adventists. It brings us face to face with such a consecration that home, family, property, everything, is surrendered into the hands of God to let him call us and send us or such means as we have, where he pleases and do what he chooses with us. . . .
>
> These things as they stand now, make a greater strain upon real, actual faith than we have ever had yet. . . . I tell you it draws on a man. I find that it draws on me. Well, all I can say, brethren, is, Let it draw (*ibid.*, pp. 110, 111).

Elder S. N. Haskell, at the same session, had the same conviction. And he later went to the ends of the earth:

> Then what will we do if we are possessors of this grace? Why, I expect we will leave our homes. I expect we will be glad to leave our homes, and devote them to the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ, and be the means of carrying the truth to the uttermost parts of the earth. . . . If our interest is circumscribed, we may offer a few prayers—and that is all good; we may send out a few periodicals—and that is all good; but how many of us will give ourselves, will give up our interests, and let our interests and our lives be so interwoven in the work of the Lord, that our practice will be in direct harmony with the work of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? (*ibid.*, p. 131).

Some made just such a consecration of their all to Jesus. The message had power. Ordained ministers even were re-baptized.* This kind of consecration will speak to the hearts of ministers:

> That is the one thing, not who shall be greatest in the Conference, or who shall be greatest in the church, or who shall have this or that position in the church, or the Conference Committee. That is not it. But, "Who shall approach the nearest to the likeness of Christ?" . . .
>
> Brethren, that is where we are (*ibid.*, p. 169).

Is this where we are today? Will we in this generation see the glory of God displayed in the finishing of His work?

What was the content of the 1888 message that had such great power to move hearts?

It can be summed up in one word—*Christ*.

For once, two Seventh-day Adventist ministers caught a glimpse of what must become our grand theme for the world:

> Of all professing Christians, Seventh-day Adventists should be foremost in uplifting Christ before the world. . . . The sinner must be led to look to Calvary; with the simple faith of a little child he must trust in the merits of the Saviour, accepting His righteousness, believing in His mercy (Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers*, pp. 156, 157).

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*W. S. Hyatt was one of these (Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, p. 257); Dr. and Mrs. Daniel H. Kress were too (see *Under the Guiding Hand*, pp. 112, 113).

Chapter 3

Christ, the Heart of the 1888 Message

Jones and Waggoner were unitedly emphatic in their uplifting Christ as the Divine One. Their mature presentations were not marred by any lingering sense of Christ being less than eternally preexistent and equal with the Father. Note how Waggoner exalts Christ in *The Glad Tidings,* page 141:

> Christ was Mediator before sin came into the world, and will be Mediator when no sin is in the universe, and no need for expiation [forgiveness]. . . . He is the very impress of the Father's being. . . . He did not first become mediator at the fall of man, but was such from eternity. No one, not simply no man, but no created being, comes to the Father but by Christ.

Jones joined Waggoner in the same proclamation of the full Deity of our Saviour:

> In the first chapter of Hebrews Christ is revealed as God, of the *name* of God, because He is of the *nature* of God. And so entirely is His nature of the nature of God, that it is the very impress of *the substance* of God.
>
> This is Christ the Saviour, Spirit of Spirit, substance of substance, of God.
>
> And this it is essential to know in the first chapter of Hebrews, in order to know what is His nature revealed in the second chapter of Hebrews *as man* (*The Consecrated Way,* p. 16).

The very heart of the 1888 message was a clear revival of New Testament justification by faith. But the messengers

succeeded in clearing away the debris of many centuries of contentious dispute. Their understanding of the three angels' messages of Revelation 14 in the light of the cleansing of the sanctuary restored their vision to near-apostolic purity, and would prepare a people for Christ's coming. For example:

> The just shall live by faith. How much of a man's life must be just?—All, every moment; for the just shall live by faith. . . .
>
> No deed that we can do can be just by the law only. By faith alone can a man or any act of his be just. The law judges a man by his works, and the law is so inconceivably great that no human act can rise to its height. There must therefore be a Mediator through whom justification shall come. . . .
>
> All the deeds of humanity are vitiated. . . .
>
> In Christ is the perfect righteousness of the law, and the grace to bestow the gift of his righteousness through faith. And of this the prophets themselves are witnesses, for they preached justification through Christ, by faith. . . .
>
> There is but one thing in this world that a man needs, and that is justification—and justification is a fact, not a theory. It is the gospel. . . . Righteousness can only be attained through faith; consequently all things worthy to be preached, must tend to justification by faith. . . .
>
> We need the righteousness of Christ to justify the present just as much as to make perfect the imperfect deeds of the past (Waggoner, *General Conference Bulletin,* 1891, p. 75).
>
> [We] wonder that any should ever suppose that the doctrine of justification by faith is going to lower the law of God. Justification carries the law on the face of it. . . . It establishes the law in the heart. Justification is the law incarnate in Christ, put into the man, so it is incarnate in the man. . . .
>
> Christ gives his righteousness, takes away the sin, and leaves his righteousness there, and that makes a radical change in the man (*ibid.,* p. 85).

As we shall see in a later chapter, Waggoner's relating justification by faith to the law in no way echoes the error of the Roman Catholic Council of Trent's *counterfeit* of justification by faith. The 1888 view of justification by faith was to

prepare a people of whom the Lord could say, "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, *and the faith of Jesus*" (Revelation 14:12, emphasis supplied).

Both messengers were charmed with the glory of Christ. Waggoner urged that we "consider Christ continually and intelligently, just as He is" (*Christ and His Righteousness*, p. 5). To see Him "just as He is" requires a full, balanced view of Christ as both our Substitute and Surety, *and* our Example and Model. It is impossible to appreciate Him as our Divine Substitute unless we also "see" Him as our Example; the latter makes glorious the former, and the former makes effective the latter:

> He should be "lifted up" in all His exceeding loveliness and power as "God with us," that His Divine attractiveness may thus draw all unto Him (*ibid.*, p. 6).
>
> The fact that Christ is a part of the Godhead, possessing all the attributes of Divinity, being the equal of the Father in all respects, as Creator and Lawgiver, is the only force there is in the atonement. . . . If Christ were not Divine, then we should have only a human sacrifice. . . . He could have no righteousness to impart to others (*ibid.*, pp. 43, 44).
>
> The sinner's surety of full and free pardon lies in the fact that the Lawgiver Himself, the One against whom he has rebelled and whom he has defied, is the One who gave Himself for us (*ibid.*, p. 45).

Jones and Waggoner laid the foundation of their message clearly and faithfully on the idea that Christ is our Substitute and that He imputes His righteousness to the believing sinner. This was the foundation that the sixteenth-century Reformers laid, that our acceptance with God is based entirely on the substitutionary work of Christ, never an iota or scintilla of our own work:

> Since the best efforts of a sinful man have not the least effect toward producing righteousness, it is evident that the only way it can come to him is a gift. . . . It is because righteousness is a gift that eternal life, which is the reward of righteousness, is the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

> Christ has been set forth by God as the One through whom forgiveness of sins is to be obtained; and this forgiveness consists simply in the declaration of His righteousness (which is the righteousness of God) for their remission. "God, who is rich in mercy" (Eph. 2:4), and who delights in it, puts His own righteousness on the sinner who believes in Jesus, as a substitute for his sins. Surely, this is a profitable exchange for the sinner, and it is no loss to God, for He is infinite in holiness, and the supply can never be diminished. . . . God puts His righteousness upon the believer. He covers him with it, so that his sin no more appears. . . .
>
> At last the sinner, weary of the vain struggle to get righteousness from the law, listens to the voice of Christ, and flees to His outstretched arms. Hiding in Christ, he is covered with His righteousness; and now behold! he has obtained, through faith in Christ, that for which he has been vainly striving. . . . It is the genuine article, because he obtained it from the Source of Righteousness. . . .
>
> There is in the transaction no ground for finding fault. God is just, and at the same time the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. In Jesus dwells all the fullness of the Godhead; He is equal with the Father in every attribute. Consequently the redemption that is in Him—the ability to buy back lost man—is infinite. Man's rebellion is against the Son as much as against the Father, since both are one (*ibid.*, pp. 60-63).

But what the sixteenth-century Reformers never did, Jones and Waggoner went on to do. They built upon this foundation a grand edifice of truth that is unique and distinctly Seventh-day Adventist, toward the completion of the Reformation begun long ago. They went on to develop a message of righteousness by faith parallel to and consistent with the unique Adventist truth of the cleansing of the sanctuary. "The message of Christ's righteousness" that is to enlighten the earth with glory is ministered from the most holy apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, where Christ our High Priest is completing His work of atonement.

This required a clearer view of Christ's righteousness manifested in human flesh than had ever been seen before.

We are told by an inspired pen that the loud cry of the third angel's message will be more light than noise:

> It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. . . . Those who wait for the Bridegroom's coming are to say to the people, "Behold your God." The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love (Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 415).

We will see how the 1888 message itself fulfilled that specification required of a true outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain. But we must first take a brief look at how Ellen G. White related herself to the message of Jones and Waggoner. Efforts have been made to discredit their message by representing Waggoner in particular as having apostatized from the truth a few weeks or months following the 1888 Conference.

Two important factors must be noted:

1. Although it is dangerous to validate a message simply by quoting prominent but uninspired theologians in its favor, still it is significant that competent theologians *do* support the view that Waggoner taught following the 1888 Conference. Some of these will be cited later in our study as favoring the same view of justification by faith. When Waggoner said that justification by faith "makes a radical change in the man," he meant that the believing sinner is "made obedient to the law." This is not the Roman Catholic view by any means!

2. Ellen White's enthusiastic endorsements of the Jones-Waggoner message continued for years *after* the 1888 Conference. In 1889 she supported "this light which these men *are* presenting" (Manuscript 5, 1889) and said that "the very message the Lord has sent to the people *of this time*" is being presented in their "discourses" (*Review and Herald*, March 5, 1889). "The present message—justification by faith—*is* a message from God; it bears the divine credentials, for its fruit is unto holiness" (*ibid.*, September 3, 1889). In 1890 she spoke of

"the evidences given in the past two years of the dealings of God by His chosen servants, . . . whom God *is* using" (*Testimonies to Ministers,* p. 466). In 1892 she continued: "God *is* working through these instrumentalities. . . . The message given us by A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner *is* a message of God to the Laodicean church" (Letter 0-19, 1892). In 1893 she exulted that "light and freedom and the outpouring of the Spirit of God have attended the work" of Jones (Letter, January 9, 1893). In 1895 she spoke frequently of how "God has given them His message. They bear the word of the Lord. . . . These men . . . have been as signs in the world, . . . moved by the Spirit of God, . . . [and were] Christ's delegated messengers" (*Testimonies to Ministers,* pp. 96, 97). "God has upheld them, . . . and he has given them precious light, and their message has fed the people of God" (Letter 51a, 1895). As late as 1896 she said that "he who rejects the light and evidence God has been liberally bestowing upon us, rejects Christ" (Letter, May 31, 1896). Scattered over the years, these endorsements number over two hundred! (Emphasis supplied in the quotations under No. 2.)

The only way to charge apostasy on Waggoner during this period is to discredit Ellen G. White by assuming that she was either naive and misinformed or derelict in her duty.

The next chapter examines one of the most essential concepts taught by both Jones and Waggoner. Documentary evidence exists to show that Waggoner held this view *before* and *after* the Minneapolis Conference, even in the face of strong opposition. It was a unique understanding of "Christ's righteousness," which it is impossible to assume Waggoner did not enunciate at the 1888 Conference, inasmuch as it forms such an integral part of the message he and Jones presented with Ellen White's endorsement.

Chapter 4

Christ Tempted as We Are

In looking into the basic ideas that made the 1888 message of Christ's righteousness unique and effective, we shall keep very close to Ellen G. White's parallel comments on the message and history of that era. In describing the revival meetings held at South Lancaster early in 1889, she directs us to the vital heart of the Jones-Waggoner message:

> Both students and teachers have shared largely in the blessing of God. The deep movings of the Spirit of God have been felt upon almost every heart. The general testimony was borne by those who attended the meeting that they had obtained an experience beyond anything they had known before. . . .
>
> I have never seen a revival work go forward with such thoroughness, and yet remain so free from all undue excitement. There was no urging or inviting. The people were not called forward, but there was a solemn realization that Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance. . . . We seemed to breathe in the very atmosphere of heaven. . . . What a beautiful sight it was to the universe to see that as fallen men and women beheld Christ, they were changed, taking the impression of his image upon their souls. . . . They saw themselves depraved and degraded in heart. . . . This subdues the pride of the heart, and is a crucifixion of self (*Review and Herald,* March 5, 1889).

The Jones-Waggoner idea of the divine, eternally preexist-

ent Christ coming to rescue man *where he is,* taking upon His sinless nature our sinful nature, and experiencing all our temptations within His soul and yet completely triumphing over our temptations—this was the central heart of their message. This was Christ's righteousness, dynamic and glorious, the fruit of lifelong conflict even unto "the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8). Speaking of the same meeting, Ellen White expresses her joy as follows:

> On Sabbath afternoon, many hearts were touched, and many souls were fed on the bread that cometh down from heaven. . . . The Lord came very near and convicted souls of their great need of his grace and love. We felt the necessity of presenting Christ as a Saviour who was not afar off, but nigh at hand (*ibid.*).

The key to understanding the heart of the 1888 message lies in that phrase—"a Saviour who was not afar off, but nigh at hand." He who is "the way, the truth, and the life" made Himself manifest to youth at the College as One *"nigh at hand,"* "Emmanuel, . . . God with us"; not with Him only, but *"with us"* (Matthew 1:23).

Who is Jesus Christ?

He comes to us in the 1888 message in a unique way. And the baffling history of the 1888 message demonstrates the great controversy between Christ and Satan. Let Christ be revealed in His fullness, and Satan will be aroused to oppose. Was Christ indeed "in all points tempted like as we are," from within as well as from without? Or was He so different from us that He could not feel our inward temptations? Could He feel as we feel? Was He really and truly man? Was He tempted only as the sinless Adam was tempted, or was He tempted as *we* are tempted?

We have our initial clue from what Ellen White said of that early 1889 meeting that Christ was revealed in the message as One nigh at hand. And she says, "*We* felt the necessity" of presenting Him so—Ellen White heartily joined with Jones and Waggoner in their presentations.

This was what so impressed her soul during this "revival work." "Both students and teachers" *"beheld Christ."* This was genuine justification by faith, for it subdued "the pride of the heart, and [was] a crucifixion of self." "What is justification by faith? It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself" (*The Faith I Live By,* p. 111, from *Special Testimonies,* Series A, No. 9, p. 62).

Let us look at a simple, straightforward example of the Jones-Waggoner message of Christ's righteousness "in the likeness of sinful flesh." Waggoner is explaining what he has taught ever since and before the 1888 Conference:

> There were two questions handed me, and I might read them now. One of them is this: "Was that holy thing which was born of the virgin Mary born in sinful flesh, and did that flesh have the same evil tendencies to contend with that ours does?" . . .
>
> Now I do not know anything about this matter, except what I read in the Bible; but that which I read in the Bible is so clear and plain that it gives me everlasting hope. [Voices: Amen!] I have had my time of discouragement and despondency and unbelief, but I thank God that it is past. That thing which for years of my life made me discouraged, after I had as earnestly and conscientiously as anyone ever did, tried to serve the Lord—that which made me give up in my soul and say, "It is no use; I cannot do it," was the knowledge, to some extent, of the weakness of my own self, and the thought that those who in my estimation were doing right, and those holy men of old of whom we read in the Bible, were differently constituted from me so that they could do right. I found by many sad experiences that I could not do anything but evil. . . .
>
> I ask you: If Jesus Christ, who is set forth by the Father as the Saviour, who came here to show me the way of salvation, in whom alone there is hope—if his life here on earth was a sham, then where is the hope? [Voice: It is gone.] "But," you say, "this question presupposes the very opposite of the fact that his life was a sham, because it presupposes that he was perfectly holy, so holy that he never had even any evil to contend with."

> That's what I am referring to. I read, he "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." I read of his praying all night. I read of his praying in such agony the drops of sweat like blood fell from his face; but if that were all make-believe, if it were all simply show, if he went through that and there was nothing to it after all, if he were not really tempted, but that was merely going through the motions of prayer, of what use is it all to me? I am left worse off than I was before.
>
> But O, if there is One—and I do not use this "if" with any thought of doubt; I will say *since* there is One who went through all that I ever can be called upon to go through, who resisted more than I in my own single person can ever be called upon to resist [Voices: Amen!], who had temptations stronger than ever has come to me personally, who was constituted in every respect as I am, only in even worse circumstances than I have been, who met all the power that the devil could exercise through human flesh, and yet who knew no sin— then I can rejoice with exceeding great joy. [Voices: Amen!] . . . And that which he did some nineteen hundred years ago is that which he is still able to do, which he does to all who believe in him (*General Conference Bulletin*, 1901, pp. 403, 404).

Before we go further, let us catch what Waggoner was really saying:

1. Christ was really tempted as we are; He prayed because He had to; He was "constituted in every respect as I am" except that He knew no sin; He met "all the power that the devil could exercise through human flesh" (through temptations within and without).

2. Yet Christ "knew no sin," and demonstrated in His flesh and life a perfect righteousness.

3. All who believe in Him truly will know His power to save *them* from sinning.

But to be fair we need to hear Waggoner out. He continues, discussing the Roman Catholic view of the nature of Christ in the flesh:

> Was Christ, that holy thing which was born of the virgin Mary, born in sinful flesh? Did you ever hear of the Roman

> Catholic doctrine of the immaculate conception? And do you know what it is? Some of you possibly have supposed in hearing of it, that it meant that Jesus Christ was born sinless. That is not the Catholic dogma at all. The doctrine of the immaculate conception is that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was born sinless. Why?—Ostensibly to magnify Jesus; really the work of the devil to put a wide gulf between Jesus the Saviour of men, and the men whom he came to save, so that one could not pass over to the other (*ibid.*, p. 404).

This wide gulf is the very error that Ellen White spoke of in her March 1889 statement above, which "we felt the necessity" of avoiding. Waggoner reveals his awareness in 1901 of opposition to the 1888 message. He continues:

> We need to settle, every one of us, whether we are out of the church of Rome or not. There are a great many that have got the marks yet, but I am persuaded of this, that every soul who is here to-night desires to know the way of truth and righteousness [Congregation: Amen!], and that there is no one here who is unconsciously clinging to the dogmas of the papacy, who does not desire to be freed from them.
>
> Do you not see that the idea that the flesh of Jesus was not like ours (because we know ours is sinful) necessarily involves the idea of the immaculate conception of the virgin Mary? Mind you, in him was no sin, but the mystery of God manifest in the flesh, . . . the perfect manifestation of the life of God in its spotless purity in the midst of sinful flesh. [Congregation: Amen!] O, that is a marvel, is it not?
>
> Suppose we start with the idea for a moment that Jesus was so separate from us, that is, so different from us that he did not have in his flesh anything to contend with. It was sinless flesh. Then, of course, you see how the Roman Catholic dogma of the immaculate conception necessarily follows. But why stop there? Mary being born sinless, then, of course, her mother also had sinless flesh. But you can not stop there. You must go back to her mother, . . . and so back until you come to Adam; and the result?—There never was a fall; Adam never sinned; and thus, you see, by that tracing of it, we find the essential identity of Roman Catholicism and Spiritualism. . . .
>
> [Christ] was tempted in the flesh, he suffered in the flesh, but he had a mind which never consented to sin. . . .

> He established the will of God in the flesh, and established the fact that God's will may be done in any human, sinful flesh. . . .
>
> Every body, your body, and my body, is prepared by God that Christ may do the will of God in it (*ibid.*, pp. 404, 405).

The simple idea Waggoner is presenting is that what Christ accomplished by overcoming in His flesh on earth He can accomplish in the flesh of all who believe in Him truly. Note his conclusion:

> When God has given this witness to the world of his power to save to the uttermost, to save sinful beings, and to live a perfect life in sinful flesh, then he will remove the disabilities and give us better circumstances in which to live. But first of all this wonder must be worked out in sinful man, not simply in the person [flesh] of Jesus Christ, but in Jesus Christ reproduced and multiplied in the thousands of his followers. So that not simply in the few sporadic cases, but in the whole body of the church, the perfect life of Christ will be manifested to the world, and that will be the last crowning work which will either save or condemn men. . . .
>
> Now when we get hold of that, we have healthful living in mortal flesh, and we shall glory in infirmities. . . . I could be perfectly content never to know any higher joy than this, that Jesus gives us, the experience of the power of Christ in sinful flesh—to put under foot, and make subservient to his will, this sinful flesh. It is the joy of victory; and there can be a shout in the camp when that is done. . . .
>
> He brings victory out of defeat; out of the depths of the pit he lifts us up, and makes us sit together with Christ in heavenly places. He can take the child that is born in sin, it may be even the product of lust, and can make that very child to sit with the princes of God's people. The Lord has shown us this in that he did not conceal His own ancestry from us. . . . We have mourned the fact that we inherited evil tendencies, sinful natures, we have almost despaired, because we could not break with these inherited evils, nor resist these tendencies to sin. . . . Jesus Christ was "born of the seed of David according to the flesh." . . . Jesus was not ashamed to call sinful men his brethren. . . .
>
> Thus we see that no matter what our inheritance may

have been by nature, the Spirit of God has such power over the flesh that it can utterly reverse all this, and make us partakers of the divine nature. . . .

O, may God help us to see some of the glorious possibilities in the gospel . . . so that we may say, "I delight to do thy will, O God; yea, thy law is within my heart," revealing its power even in my sinful, mortal flesh, to the everlasting praise of the glory of his grace (*ibid.*, pp. 406-408).

These ideas of Christ's righteousness are identical to those Waggoner presented both before and immediately after the 1888 Conference. The basic idea remained clear and undistorted. Note what he wrote in a letter to G. I. Butler February 10, 1887, and published late in 1888:

Read Rom. 8:3, and you will learn the nature of the flesh which the Word was made: . . .

"God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Christ was born in the likeness of sinful flesh [then he quotes Philippians 2:5-7 and Hebrews 2:9]. . . .

These texts show that Christ took upon himself man's nature, and that as a consequence he was subject to death. He came into the world on purpose to die; and so from the beginning of his earthly life he was in the same condition that the men are in whom he died to save. Now read,

Rom. 1:3: The gospel of God, "concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which *was made* of the seed of David according to the flesh." What was the nature of David, "according to the flesh"? Sinful, was it not? David says: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Ps. 51:5. Don't start in horrified astonishment; I am not implying that Christ was a sinner. . . . [quotes Hebrews 2:16, 17]

His being made in all things like unto his brethren, is the same as his being made in the likeness of sinful flesh, "made in the likeness of men." One of the most encouraging things in the Bible is the knowledge that Christ took on him the nature of man; to know that his ancestors according to the flesh were sinners. When we read the record of the lives of the ancestors of Christ, and see that they had all the weaknesses and passions that we have, we find that no man has any right to excuse his sinful acts on the ground of heredity.

If Christ had not been made *in all things* like unto his brethren, then his sinless life would be no encouragement to us. We might look at it with admiration, but it would be the admiration that would cause hopeless despair. . . . [quotes 2 Corinthians 5:2]

Now when was Jesus made sin for us? It must have been when he was made flesh, and began to suffer the temptations and infirmities that are incident to sinful flesh. He passed through every phase of human experience, being "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." He was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." "He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows" (Isa. 53:4); and this scripture is said by Matthew to have been fulfilled long before the Crucifixion. So I say that his being born under the law was a necessary consequence of his being born in the likeness of sinful flesh, of taking upon himself the nature of Abraham. He was made like man, in order that he might undergo the suffering of death. From the earliest childhood the cross was ever before him.

4. You say: "That he did voluntarily take the sins of the world upon him in his great sacrifice upon the cross, we [General Conference and Review and Herald leadership] admit; but he was not *born* under its condemnation. Of him that was pure, and had never committed a sin in his life, it would be an astonishing perversion of all proper theology to say that he was born under the condemnation of the law" [cf. Butler, *The Law in Galatians,* p. 58].

It may be a perversion of theology, but it is exactly in harmony with the Bible, and that is the main point. . . . You are shocked at the idea that Jesus was born under the condemnation of the law, because he never committed a sin in his life. But you admit that on the cross he was under the condemnation of the law. What! had he then committed sin? Not by any means. Well, then, if Jesus could be under the condemnation of the law at one time in his life, and be sinless, I see no reason why he could not be under the condemnation of the law at another time, and still be sinless. . . .

I simply cannot understand how God could be manifest in the flesh, and in the likeness of sinful flesh. . . . I simply accept the Scripture statement, that only so could he be the Saviour of men; and I rejoice in that knowledge, because since he was made sin, I may be made the righteousness of

God in him (Waggoner, *The Gospel in the Book of Galatians*, 1888, pp. 60-62).

What makes this rather extended statement on the nature of Christ so interesting is that Waggoner actually published it in 1888, and then only after allowing the subject matter to mature in his mind for over a year.

From interviews with Waggoner's wife, Froom informs us that she took down her husband's studies at the 1888 Conference in shorthand and transcribed them. Waggoner then edited these notes for articles in the *Signs of the Times* and later published them in his *Christ and His Righteousness* and other books (cf. Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, pp. 200, 201). Waggoner hardly had time to unpack his bags after the 1888 Conference before he was writing in the January 21, 1889, *Signs* (the passage also appears in slightly edited form in *Christ and His Righteousness*, pages 26-30) as follows, probably from his transcribed notes:

> A little thought will be sufficient to show anybody that if Christ took upon himself the likeness of man, in order that he might suffer death, it must have been sinful man that he was made like, for it is only sin that causes death. Death . . . could not have had any power over Christ if the Lord had not laid on him the iniquity of us all. Moreover, the fact that Christ took upon himself the flesh, not of a sinless being but of sinful man, that is, that the flesh which he assumed had all the weaknesses and sinful tendencies to which fallen human nature is subject, is shown by the very words upon which this article is based. He was "made of the seed of David according to the flesh." . . .
>
> Although his mother was a pure and godly woman, as could but be expected, no one can doubt that the human nature of Christ must have been more subject to the infirmities of the flesh than it would have been if he had been born before the race had so greatly deteriorated physically and morally. . . . [quotes Hebrews 2:16-18 and 2 Corinthians 5:21]
>
> This is much stronger than the statement that he was made "in the likeness of sinful flesh." He was *made to be sin*.

> . . . Sinless, yet not only counted as a sinner, but actually taking upon himself sinful nature. . . . [quotes Galatians 4:4, 5]
>
> Jesus spent whole nights in prayer to the Father. Why should this be, if he had not been oppressed by the enemy, through the inherited weakness of the flesh? He "learned . . . obedience by the things which he suffered." Not that he was ever disobedient, for he "knew no sin"; but by the things which he suffered in the flesh, he learned what men have to contend against in their efforts to be obedient. . . .
>
> Some may have thought, while reading this article thus far, that we were depreciating the character of Jesus, by bringing him down to the level of sinful man. On the contrary, we are simply exalting the "divine power" of our blessed Saviour, who himself voluntarily descended to the level of sinful man, in order that he might exalt man to his own spotless purity, which he retained under the most adverse circumstances. . . . His humanity only veiled his divine nature, which was more than able to successfully resist the sinful passions of the flesh. There was in his whole life a struggle. The flesh, moved upon by the enemy of all righteousness, would tend to sin, yet his divine nature never for a moment harbored an evil desire, nor did his divine power for a moment waver. Having suffered in the flesh all that all men can possibly suffer, he returned to the throne of the Father, as spotless as when he left the courts of glory. . . . Then let the weary, feeble, sin-oppressed souls take courage. Let them "come boldly unto the throne of grace," where they are sure to find grace to help in time of need, because that need is felt by our Saviour, in the very time of need.

The observant reader will note that Waggoner did not say that Christ "had" a sinful nature. He says Christ "took" *our* sinful nature, a nature that had within it all the capability of being tempted from within or without, a nature like ours with all the results of our heredity. But never for a moment did Jesus yield.

Did Ellen White fully endorse this concept of Christ's righteousness? At the 1888 Conference itself she said, "I see the beauty of truth in the presentation of the righteousness of

Christ in relation to the law as the doctor [Waggoner] has placed it before us. . . . That which has been presented harmonizes perfectly with the light which God has been pleased to give me during all the years of my experience" (Manuscript 15, 1888). "The righteousness of Christ in relation to the law" is obviously not His preincarnation holiness but His character and sacrifice wrought out in His incarnation "in the likeness of sinful flesh." As we have seen above, Waggoner made clear to Elder Butler that he believed Christ was "born under the law . . . [as] a necessary consequence of His being born in the likeness of sinful flesh, of taking upon Himself the nature of Abraham." It would be impossible for Ellen White to endorse as "the beauty of truth" Waggoner's concept "of the righteousness of Christ in relation to the law" *unless* it included this tremendous idea of Christ taking "our sinful nature" and yet developing a perfectly sinless character.

In fact, she was enthusiastic:

> When Brother Waggoner brought out these ideas in the Minneapolis Conference it was the first clear teaching of the subject from any human lips I had heard, excepting the communication between myself and my husband. I have said to myself, it is because God has presented it to me in vision that I see it so clearly, and they [the opposing brethren] cannot see it because they have not had it presented to them as I have; and when another presented it, every fiber of my heart said amen (Manuscript 5, 1889).

How could Ellen White have said something like this if Waggoner was merely reemphasizing Lutheran and Calvinist ideas?

Chapter 5

Ellen White Supports the Jones-Waggoner Idea

This concept of Christ's righteousness was unwelcome to Elder Butler, the General Conference President who contended with Waggoner (cf. Butler, *The Law in Galatians,* p. 58, and Waggoner, *The Gospel in Galatians,* p. 62). It was also unwelcome to others of our people who wrote letters to Ellen White complaining of the teachings of Waggoner and Jones. She replied with vigor in a morning talk at Battle Creek in "How to Meet a Controverted Point of Doctrine":

> Letters have been coming in to me, affirming that Christ could not have had the same nature as man, for if He had, He would have fallen under similar temptations. If He did not have man's nature, He could not be our example. If He was not a partaker of our nature, He could not have been tempted as man has been. If it were not possible for Him to yield to temptation, He could not be our helper. It was a solemn reality that Christ came to fight the battles as man, in man's behalf. His temptation and victory tell us that humanity must copy the Pattern; man must become a partaker of the divine nature. . . .
>
> Men may have a power to resist evil—a power that neither earth, nor death, nor hell can master; a power that will place them where they may overcome as Christ overcame (morning talk, January 29, 1890; *Selected Messages,* Book One, pp. 408, 409).

All through the 1890s Ellen White made clear her unequivocal support of this key concept of the 1888 message. In all

her multitudinous endorsements of the message there is not the slightest hint that she was making any reservations about its central feature. In February 1894 she published a little tract entitled "Christ Tempted As We Are":

> But many say that Jesus was not like us, that He was not as we are in the world, that He was divine, and therefore we cannot overcome as He overcame. But this is not true; "for verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. . . . For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." Christ knows the sinner's trials; He knows his temptations. He took upon Himself our nature (pp. 3, 4).

And if, as she says (and she is quoting the Bible), Christ was tempted as we are, what does she mean further on? She must mean what she says:

> The Christian is to realize that he is not his own. . . . His strongest temptations will come from within; for he must battle against the inclinations of the natural heart. The Lord knows our weaknesses. . . . Every struggle against sin . . . is Christ working through His appointed agencies upon the human heart. Oh, if we could comprehend what Jesus is to us and what we are to Him! (p. 11).

In *The Desire of Ages*, page 49, she expresses her convictions for the world to read, written during this post-1888 period. In none of her previous writings on the nature of Christ did she express the idea quite so clearly and forcefully:

> It would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man's nature, even when Adam stood in his innocence in Eden. But Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin. Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity. What these results were is shown in the history of His earthly ancestors. He came with such a heredity to share our sorrows and temptations, and to give us the example of a sinless life.

Did Christ "take" the sinless nature of Adam before the Fall? He "was made of the seed of David according to the

flesh" (Romans 1:3). He was not created as a replica of Adam, formed of the dust of the ground anew with the breath of life breathed into His nostrils. He was "like every *child* of Adam" in accepting "the results of the working of the great law of heredity." The glorious paradox must ever be kept pure and clear:

> Clad in the vestments of humanity, the Son of God came down to the level of those he wished to save. In him was no guile or sinfulness; he was ever pure and undefiled; yet he took upon him our sinful nature (*Review and Herald,* December 15, 1896).

The emphasis in her writings after 1888 is overwhelming. For example:

> In our own strength it is impossible for us to deny the clamors of our fallen nature. Through this channel Satan will bring temptation upon us. Christ knew that the enemy would come to every human being, to take advantage of hereditary weakness, and by his false insinuations to ensnare all whose trust is not in God. And by passing over the ground man must travel, our Lord prepared the way for us to overcome. . . . There was in Him nothing that responded to Satan's sophistry. He did not consent to sin. Not even by a thought did He yield to temptation. So it may be with us (*The Desire of Ages,* pp. 122, 123).
>
> Temptation is resisted when a man is powerfully influenced to do a wrong action and, knowing that he can do it, resists, by faith, with a firm hold upon divine power. This was the ordeal through which Christ passed (*The Youth's Instructor,* July 20, 1899).
>
> In this conflict the humanity of Christ was taxed as none of us will ever know. . . . These were real temptations, no pretense. . . . The Son of God in His humanity wrestled with the very same fierce, apparently overwhelming temptations that assail men—temptations to indulgence of appetite, to presumptuous venturing where God has not led them, and to the worship of the god of this world, to sacrifice an eternity of bliss for the fascinating pleasures of this life (Letter 116, 1899; *Selected Messages,* Book One, pp. 94, 95).

Error is always divisive; truth is always unifying. Jones and Waggoner perfectly agreed with each other in their presentations of Christ's righteousness. It is really phenomenal that two men temperamentally "unlike as garden fruit and apples of the desert" (Arthur W. Spalding, *Captains of the Host*, p. 590) could thread their way through the maze of hidden theological pitfalls awaiting anyone who studies these subjects, and remain in such vital unity. They believed in unity, they appealed to the church to be in unity, and they admirably demonstrated unity during the time when their message was the critical issue facing the church.

They were not concerned with splitting theological hairs or settling semantic difficulties. They were primarily messengers, reformers, evangelists, burdened with the finishing of God's work in their generation. Their theology was concerned with making a people ready for the coming of the Lord. Note Jones's presentation of the righteousness of Christ:

> Being in all things made *like* us, He, when tempted, felt just as we feel when we are tempted, and knows all about it: and so can help and save to the uttermost all who will receive Him. As in His flesh, and as in Himself in the flesh, He was as weak as we are, and of Himself could "do nothing" (John 5:30); so when He bore "our griefs, and carried our sorrows" (Isa. 53:4), and was tempted as we are, *feeling* as we *feel*, by His divine *faith* He conquered *all* by the *power of God which that faith brought to him*, and which *in our flesh* He has brought to us.
>
> Therefore, His name is called Immanuel, which is "God with us." Not God with *Him* only, but God with *us* (*The Consecrated Way*, p. 26).

It is on the words of Jesus that Jones bases his convictions on the nature of Christ and His righteousness. As such, Jesus' own words (John 5:30) deserve our closest scrutiny, for they are often neglected:

> I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

Was Jones correct in his understanding?

In these words of Jesus lies the acorn of truth that produced the mighty oak of the 1888 message. Here the Lord discloses the internal struggle within His flesh and His soul that makes the term "Christ's righteousness" meaningful and relevant to the needs of fallen mankind. This is the basis for Waggoner's statement noted above, "There was in His whole life a struggle" (*Christ and His Righteousness,* pp. 28, 29).

Jesus had to do something constantly that the sinless Adam never had to do—He had to deny an inner will ("mine own will") that was perpetually in potential opposition to His Father's will. This struggle came to a climax in Gethsemane, where He prayed in agony, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39). Such an internal struggle could be possible only to One who knew "the clamors of our fallen nature."

Seen in this light, Christ's victory appeared to Jones and Waggoner as a glorious dynamic righteousness, the fruit of struggle and conflict rather than the usual concept of a passive entity divinely inherited and easily natural. Let us catch the high points of Jones's presentation of Christ's glorious righteousness:

> If He were not of the same flesh as are those whom He came to redeem, then there is no sort of use of His being made flesh at all. More than this: Since the only flesh that there is in this wide world which He came to redeem, is just the poor, sinful, lost, human flesh that all mankind have; if this is not the flesh that He was made, then He never really came *to* the world which needs to be redeemed. For if He came in a human nature different from that which human nature in this world actually is, then, even though He were in the world, yet, for any practical purpose in reaching man and helping him, He was as far from him as if He had never come: for, in that case, in His human nature He was just as far from man and just as much of another world as if He had never come into this world at all (*The Consecrated Way,* p. 35).

The faith of Rome as to the human nature of Christ and Mary, and of ourselves, springs from that idea of the natural

mind that God is too pure and too holy to dwell with us and in us in our sinful human nature: that sinful as we are, we are too far off for Him in His purity and holiness to come to us just as we are.

The true faith—the faith of Jesus—is that, far off from God as we are in our sinfulness, in our human nature which He took, He *has come* to us where we are; that, infinitely pure and holy as He is, and sinful, degraded, and lost, as we are, He in Christ by His Holy Spirit will willingly dwell with us and in us, to save us, to purify us, and to make us holy.

The faith of Rome is that we must be pure and holy in order that God shall dwell with us at all.

The faith of Jesus is that God must dwell with us, and in us, in order that we shall be holy or pure at all (*ibid.*, p. 39).

Jones sees great significance in Paul's phrase "in the flesh" in Romans 8:3, as referring to the flesh of Christ; that Christ actually condemned sin *in* His flesh, and thus condemned it in all flesh. With this understanding, Jones sees the word *likeness* as meaning more than superficial appearance that connotes unlikeness:

Only by His subjecting Himself to the law of heredity could He reach sin in full and true measure as sin truly is. . . . There is in each person, in many ways, the *liability* to sin, *inherited* from generations back, which has not yet culminated in the act of sinning, but which is ever ready, when occasion offers, to blaze forth in the actual committing of sins. . . .

There must be met and subdued this *hereditary liability* to sin, . . . this hereditary tendency that is in us, to sin. . . .

Our *liability* to sin was laid upon Him, in His being made flesh. . . .

Thus He met sin *in the flesh which He took,* and *triumphed over it,* as it is written: "God sending his own Son in *the likeness of sinful flesh,* and for sin, *condemned sin* IN THE FLESH" (*ibid.*, pp. 40, 41).

To *keep us from sinning,* His righteousness is *imparted* to us in our flesh; as our flesh, with its liability to sin, was *imparted* to Him (*ibid.*, p. 42).

Thus, both by heredity and by imputation, He was laden with "the sin of the world." And, thus laden, at this im-

> mense disadvantage, He passed triumphantly over the ground where, at no shadow of any disadvantage whatever, the first pair failed. . . .
>
> And by condemning sin *in the flesh,* by abolishing in His *flesh* the enmity, He delivers from the power of the law of heredity; and so can, in righteousness, impart His divine nature and power to lift above that law, and hold above that law, and hold above it, every soul that receives Him (*ibid.,* p. 43).

Now follows the powerful evangelistic appeal, the basis for Ellen White's judgment that "this is the message that God commanded to be given to the world":

> God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, Christ taking our nature as our nature in its sinfulness and degeneracy, and God dwelling constantly with Him and in Him in that nature—in this God has demonstrated to all people forever, that there is no soul in this world so laden with sins or so lost that God will not gladly dwell with him and in him to save him from it all, and to lead him in the way of the righteousness of God.
>
> And so certainly is His name Emmanuel, which is, "*God* with *us* [emphasis supplied]" (*ibid.,* p. 44).

It is abundantly clear that this message is based entirely on Scripture. Jesus' own words in the Gospels of John and Matthew disclose to us the nature of His own inner struggle against temptation (John 5:30; 6:38; Matthew 26:39). He took a will upon Himself that had to be constantly denied in order to follow His Father's will; and the struggle was so intense in Gethsemane that He sweat drops of blood. Paul adds that He denied self (Romans 15:3).

This explains how He was sent "in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (8:3). Paul explains how we "were in bondage under the elements (*stoicheia*) of the world: but . . . God sent forth his Son, . . . made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law" (Galatians 4:3-5). Christ was sent to solve the problem of sin *where it existed,* entering the sphere where these powers had

become entrenched. And having invaded enemy territory, He conquered. He assumed fallen human nature that had been invaded by the evil powers, and in enemy-occupied territory He won the victory for us. To be made "under the law" cannot possibly mean under the physical terms of the ceremonial Jewish law, for that would mean that the only ones He came to "redeem" were literal Jews. "Under the law" clearly means the same sphere of "the elements of the world" as we have known. He knew our conflict with the will, and where we failed, He overcame.

He has reconciled us "in his body of flesh by his death." "He disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him" (Colossians 1:22; 2:15, RSV).

The author of Hebrews piles words on words to make his meaning clear. Only the supreme sophistry of a master enemy could have beclouded these inspired concepts through nearly two thousand years of history:

> He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren. . . . Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same. . . . Verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren. . . . In that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted (Hebrews 2:11-18).
>
> We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:15, 16).

Some have read into one unpublished Ellen White letter an esoteric meaning that presumably contradicts all of the voluminous emphasis in all her other writings on the message of Christ's righteousness in the likeness of our sinful flesh. She

cautioned an obscure evangelist in New Zealand to be "exceedingly careful" how *he* taught "the human nature of Christ," as follows:

> Do not set Him before the people as a man with the propensities of sin. . . . Not for one moment was there in Him an evil propensity. . . .
>
> Avoid every question in relation to the humanity of Christ which is liable to be misunderstood. Truth lies close to the track of presumption. In treating upon the humanity of Christ, you need to guard strenuously every assertion, lest your words be taken to mean more than they imply, and thus you lose or dim the clear perceptions of His humanity as combined with divinity. . . .
>
> Never, in any way, leave the slightest impression upon human minds that a taint of, or inclination to, corruption rested upon Christ, or that He in any way yielded to corruption. . . .
>
> On not one occasion was there a response to his [Satan's] manifold temptations. Not once did Christ step on Satan's ground, to give him any advantage. Satan found nothing in Him to encourage his advances (Letter 8, 1895; *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 5, pp. 1128, 1129).

Several important factors guide our understanding of this testimony.

1. The caution against careless, imprecise, or sloppy terminology is needed by all of us. This *is* a vital topic that requires exactness in the use of inspired words. For example, it is not correct to say that Christ "had" a sinful nature, for this may be construed "to mean more than" it implies. The correct statement is that "He took upon His sinless nature our sinful nature, that He might know how to succour those that are tempted" (Ellen G. White, *The Medical Ministry*, p. 181).

2. The letter means exactly what it says in its context. But there is no reason to twist it out of its context and make of it a condemnation of the 1888 message as taught by Jones and Waggoner. In fact, its author is telling W. L. H. Baker that he would be safe if he would follow Jones's and Waggoner's examples and stick to their precise and sharply defined ex-

pressions. This is evident in that she used syntax and terminology almost identical to that of Waggoner about seven years earlier. Let us compare Waggoner's and Ellen White's statements side by side—both describe Christ's battle with temptation in the flesh and His perfect victory:

WAGGONER, January 21, 1889 (*Signs*):

His humanity only veiled his divine nature, which was more than able to successfully *resist* the sinful passions of the flesh. There was in his whole life a struggle. The flesh, moved upon by the enemy of all righteousness, would tend to sin, yet his divine nature *never for a moment harbored* an evil desire, nor did his divine power *for a moment waver*. . . He returned to the throne of the Father, as *spotless* as when he left the courts of glory. (Emphasis added.)

ELLEN WHITE, Letter 8, 1895:

Jesus Christ was the only-begotten Son of God. He took upon himself human nature, and was tempted in all points as human nature is tempted. He could have sinned; he could have fallen, but *not for one moment* was there in him an evil propensity. . . . Never in any way leave the slightest impression that a taint of, or an inclination to, corruption *rested* upon Christ, *or* that he in any way *yielded* to corruption. . . . *On not one* occasion was there a *response* to . . . [Satan's] manifold temptations. *Not once* did Christ *step* on Satan's ground. (Emphasis added.)

3. The idea that Ellen White was writing this letter to Baker as an oblique or backhanded rebuke to Waggoner and Jones is preposterous to anyone who appreciates Ellen White's open and honest character. She knew well how to address herself to *them* if she at all wished to correct their teaching. Never once did she do so in any written communication extant.

4. She made no attempt to publish this letter during her lifetime. (In fact, it never came to light until the 1950s.) This would hardly be characteristic of Ellen White if she felt that Jones's and Waggoner's teachings had misled the world church.

5. W. W. Prescott had been visiting in Australia shortly before the writing of this letter to Baker and had presented

clear sermons at the Armadale camp meetings in October, which Ellen White attended. His understanding of the nature of Christ was practically identical to that of Jones's and Waggoner's. She wrote as follows of Prescott's Armadale sermons:

> In every sermon Christ was preached, and as the great and mysterious truths regarding his presence and work in the hearts of men were made clear and plain, . . . a glorious and convincing light . . . sent conviction to many hearts. With solemnity the people said, "We have listened to truth to-night."
>
> In the evening Professor Prescott gave a most valuable lesson, precious as gold. . . . Truth was separated from error, and made, by the divine Spirit, to shine like precious jewels. . . .
>
> The Lord is working in power through his servants who are proclaiming the truth, and he has given brother Prescott a special message for the people. The truth comes from human lips in demonstration of the Spirit and power of God (*Review and Herald,* January 7, 1896).

6. Never did Jones or Waggoner set Christ before the people as a man with the propensities of sin. *The Oxford English Dictionary* recognizes the etymology of "propensity" in the Latin *propendere,* "to hang or lean forward or downward." We get our word *pendulum* from the same source. The word *propensity* implies a "response to gravity," "a definite hanging down," instead of resistance. It definitely connotes actual participation in sin, and Ellen White used the word in its finest English connotation.

7. To equate "propensities of sin" with Christ's taking upon His sinless nature our sinful nature is not correct. Although we are "born with inherent propensities of disobedience" (*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* Vol. 5, p. 1128) as sinners, and thus have evil propensities, it is also true that "we need not retain one sinful propensity" (*ibid.,* Vol. 7, p. 943), even though we still have a sinful nature. Ellen White did not equate "evil propensities" with "tendencies" or "inclinations," which all have as "the results of the working of

the great law of heredity" and which Christ "took upon Himself in His battle with temptation as we must fight it. She stated that Christ had "to resist the inclination" (*ibid.*, p. 930).

Even though some nontheological dictionaries equate *propensities* with *inclinations*, the etymological roots are different and imply only the capacity "to *feel* strong pressure exerted" but do not necessarily imply "*a response*" thereto. Indeed, we must be careful, exceedingly careful.

Nevertheless there were questions and tensions throughout the 1888 era, some hindering the acceptance of the gracious message of salvation. Jones considers one of the questions:

> In Jesus Christ, we meet him whose holiness is a consuming fire to sin. . . . The all-consuming purity of that holiness, will take every vestige of sin and sinfulness out of the man who will meet God in Jesus Christ.
>
> Thus in his true holiness, Christ could come, and did come, to sinful men in sinful flesh, where sinful men are. . . .
>
> Some have found, and all may find, in the "Testimonies" the statement that Christ has not "like *passions*" as we have. The statement is there; every one may find it there, of course (cf. *Testimonies*, Vol. 2, p. 509).
>
> Now there will be no difficulty in any of these studies from beginning to end, if you will stick precisely to what is said, and not go beyond what is said, nor put into it what is not said (*General Conference Bulletin*, 1895, p. 312).
>
> Now as to Christ's not having "like passions" with us: In the Scriptures all the way through he is like us, and with us according to the flesh. . . . He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. Don't go too far. He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh; not in the likeness of sinful mind. Do not drag his mind into it. His flesh was our flesh; but the mind was "the mind of Christ Jesus." . . . If he had taken our mind, how, then, could we ever have been exhorted to "let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus"? It would have been so already (*ibid.*, p. 327).

It is obvious to any unprejudiced mind that Jones was merely saying that never "for one moment" did Christ *yield* or

consent to participation in sin. He uses "mind" in the finest Pauline connotation—that of purpose or choice.

We must look beyond the confusing controversies that we have built up in our day in order to see the simple charm of the 1888 message in its original beauty. Some nights after revival meetings following the Minneapolis session, Ellen White could not sleep for joy. The Holy Spirit was working on the hearts of college youth through these presentations of the righteousness of Christ:

> Meetings were held in the College which were intensely interesting [if righteousness by faith is not interesting, there is something wrong with it!]. . . . The Christian life, which had before seemed to them undesirable and full of inconsistencies, now appeared in its true light, in remarkable symmetry and beauty. He who had been to them as a root out of dry ground, without form or comeliness, became "the chiefest among ten thousand," and the one "altogether lovely" (*Review and Herald,* February 12, 1889).

Concluding his presentation of Christ's righteousness "in the likeness of sinful flesh," Waggoner makes this powerful appeal to the heart:

> But someone will say, "I don't see any comfort in this for me. To be sure, I have an example, but I can't follow it, for I haven't the power that Christ had. He was God even while here on earth; I am but a man." Yes, but you may have the same power that He had if you want it. He was "compassed with infirmity," yet He "did no sin." . . .
>
> Then let the weary, feeble, sin-oppressed souls take courage. Let them "come boldly unto the throne of grace," where they are sure to find grace to help in time of need, because that need is felt by our Saviour in the very time of need. He is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (*Christ and His Righteousness,* pp. 29, 30).

Surely today we also must feel "the necessity of presenting Christ as a Saviour who is not afar off, but nigh at hand"!

Chapter 6

The 1888 Messengers Do Not Invalidate Their Message

When one begins to realize the significance of the 1888 message as the beginning of the latter rain and the loud cry, a perplexing question arises immediately: What happened to the messengers themselves?

Both Jones and Waggoner developed serious problems in their later years. And many have superficially assumed this demonstrates that their message itself could not be valid. Although he never gave up the Seventh-day Adventist message, Jones left the church, largely due to personal problems with his brethren. Waggoner remained a Christian gentleman to the end, but he suffered a tragic domestic failure and fell prey to pantheistic error.

Those who have opposed the 1888 message have justified themselves by trying to apply Jesus' words to the 1888 messengers: "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit" (Matthew 7:16, 17). On the surface, applying these words of Jesus to the Jones-Waggoner history has caused many people for decades to reject their message. And such reasoning has seemed plausible.

However, the pen of inspiration has declared very emphatically that such reasoning in the case of Jones and Waggoner is not correct but is in fact "a fatal delusion." There is an important and very unique factor in this case that many have overlooked. To reject the message on the grounds of Jones's

and Waggoner's later problems is like rejecting the Seventh-day Adventist message because one has happened to meet an unworthy member of that church. Many people do indeed reject a true message for such subjective reasons, but in the process lose a great blessing. And for us to reject the 1888 message for such a reason is to postpone indefinitely the blessings of the latter rain and the loud cry.

One wishes that Jones and Waggoner could have finished their life course in honor. If they had done so, no one could today find any "hooks" on which to hang his doubts about their message. After all the history of the past ninety years, we would be compelled to believe! Their later personal failures are the great disappointment of the 1888 history, as October 22, 1844, was to the beginning of our history as a movement. Both are embarrassing, and both require understanding, or we shall make serious mistakes. It seems that the Lord Himself has permitted both as an almost overmastering point of confusion and a stumbling block to anyone who is looking for an excuse to reject truth.

The following are some reasons why it is a "fatal delusion" to reject or even to lightly regard the 1888 message because of the weaknesses inherent of the messengers themselves:

1. *Jones's and Waggoner's later errors and mistakes were not due to a fault or weakness inherent in their message itself.* As early as 1892 Ellen White predicted the possibility of their later defection, and made it clear that if this sad development should take place, it would in no way affect the validity of their message:

> It is quite possible that Elder Jones or Waggoner may be overthrown by the temptations of the enemy; but if they should be, this would not prove that they had had no message from God, or that the work that they had done was all a mistake (Letter S-24, 1892).

Should the Lord's messengers, after standing manfully for the truth for a time, fall under temptation, and dishonor Him who has given them their work, will that be proof that the message is not true? No. . . . Sin on the part of the

> messenger of God would cause Satan to rejoice, and those who have rejected the message and the messenger would triumph; but it would not at all clear the men who are guilty of rejecting the message of God (Letter 0-19, 1892).

But what could possibly cause Jones and Waggoner to lose their way? If no fault in the message led them astray, and if they were indeed entrusted by the Lord with a most precious message, the beginning of the latter rain, could any influence or temptation be strong enough to overthrow them? The next exhibit will throw light on this reasonable question.

2. *Jones and Waggoner were forced to endure "unchristlike persecution" from their brethren that subjected them to pressures that no others have been called to endure in quite the same way:*

> I wish that all would see that the very same spirit which refused to accept Christ, the light that would dispel the moral darkness, is far from being extinct in this age of the world. . . .
>
> Some may say, "I do not hate my brother; I am not so bad as that." But how little they understand their own hearts. They may think they have a zeal for God in their feelings against their brother if his ideas seem in any way to conflict with theirs; feelings are brought to the surface that have no kinship with love. . . . They would as leave be at sword's point with their brother as not, and yet he may be bearing a message from God to the people, just the light we need for this time. . . .
>
> They take step after step in the false way, until there seems to be no other course for them than to go on, believing they are right in their bitterness of feeling against their brethren. Will the Lord's messenger bear the pressure brought against him? If so, it is because the Lord bids him stand in His strength, and vindicate the truth that he is sent of God. . . .
>
> I have deep sorrow of heart because I have seen how readily a word or action of Elder Jones or Elder Waggoner is criticized. How readily many minds overlook all the good that has been done by them in the few years past, and see no evidence that God is working through these instrumentalities. They hunt for something to condemn, and their attitude toward these brethren who are zealously engaged

> in doing a good work, shows that feelings of enmity and bitterness are in the heart. . . . Cease watching your brethren with suspicion (Letter 0-19, 1892).

Consider the situation that Jones and Waggoner were in. It was unique, something that is difficult to duplicate in sacred history:

a. They knew their message had come from the Lord.

b. They knew it was the beginning of the latter rain.

c. They knew they had followed the leading of the Lord in proclaiming it under the circumstances that had developed.

d. They keenly felt what Ellen White delineated as "hatred," "condemnation," "bitterness," and "rejection" on the part of their brethren in the faith. These are her own words. And the date of Ellen White's letters above indicates that these painful negative feelings on the part of the brethren continued *after* the confessions and tearful repentances their brethren had expressed from 1890 to 1891 (cf. *Through Crisis to Victory 1888-1901,* pp. 82-114). The pen of inspiration discloses to us that these "confessors" continued their opposition right on, unable to avoid returning to the same rut of rejection of the message that they fell into initially at the 1888 Conference (cf. Uriah Smith's editorial opposing Waggoner, *Review and Herald,* May 10, 1892, and later articles that year opposing Jones; Ellen White, Letter S-24, 1892, and Letter, January 9, 1893; and testimonies as late as 1897 stating that the opposition was continuing).

e. In comparison with Jones and Waggoner, Luther had a relatively easy problem in meeting the virulent opposition of the Papacy and Catholic hierarchy toward his message. True, the hatred he had to endure was open and physically and verbally violent. But what enabled Luther to "bear the pressure brought against him" (to borrow Ellen White's phrase regarding Jones and Waggoner) was his understanding of the clear prophetic messages of Daniel and Revelation. He saw Rome as the "beast," the "little horn," the "harlot." Thus the mysterious opposition he had to endure was explainable and

justified by the disclosures of God's Word.

f. But the Lord's messengers in the 1888 era enjoyed no such Biblical disclosure to help them bear the pressure brought against them. They firmly believed the Seventh-day Adventist Church to be the true remnant church of Bible prophecy. They had confidence in the principles of organization that recognized the General Conference as the highest authority under God. They recognized their brethren as Heaven's appointed leaders of His work. They knew that heavenly intelligences were watching with deep interest the unfolding of the drama.

They were both involved in the defense of the national cause of religious liberty as the United States Congress came close to the enactment of a Sunday law, closer than at any other time in American history—a powerful and compelling evidence that the world had reached the time for the loud cry to go forth with unprecedented power. And they knew that their generation was living in the time of the cleansing of the sanctuary, the investigative judgment, when the blindness and unbelief of former generations must not be repeated.

And yet, to their astonishment, never had history recorded a more shameful failure on the part of God's people to enter in to the realization of immense eschatological opportunity! It seemed to be an unprecedented unbelief and rejection on the part of modern Israel. When the messengers' own hearts were thrilled with a keener Heaven-inspired love than they had ever known, they met an icy hatred from brethren whom the Lord called to unite with them in their mission.

It seemed to Jones and Waggoner to be the final, complete failure of God's program. What could possibly lie beyond? It was a deranging experience.

g. The date of the Ellen White letters cited above is significant in that during 1892 Waggoner was sent to England under circumstances of extreme privation. The year previous Ellen White was sent to Australia, with "no light from the Lord" that it was His will for her to go other than that the

General Conference had called her. Thus the team that was proclaiming the message of Christ's righteousness in camp meetings, churches, colleges, workers' meetings,and by personal work, was broken up. Waggoner and Jones would be more than human if they did not feel this as a slap in the face and the rejection of their unique message and work.

3. *Ellen White summarized the total impact of this reaction as virtual persecution:*

> We should be the last people on the earth to indulge in the slightest degree the spirit of persecution against those who are bearing the message of God to the world. This is the most terrible feature of unchristlikeness that has manifested itself among us since the Minneapolis meeting. Sometime it will be seen in its true bearing, with all the burden of woe that has resulted from it (*General Conference Bulletin*, 1893, p. 184).

It is very easy for us to say that the messengers should have borne the pressure against them:

> Will the Lord's messenger bear the pressure brought against him? If so, it is because God bids him stand in his strength, and vindicate the truth that he is sent of God (Letter 0-19, 1892).

But God's infinite wisdom decreed apparently that the messengers were not to vindicate the truth that they were sent of God by any subjective evidences. It has apparently been His will that this present generation now evaluate their message strictly on the objective evidence inherent in the message itself, aside from all factors that would superficially constitute compelling evidence. This generation must evaluate the message as it appeared to the 1888 generation—the stumbling block of faulty human personalities must be present again to provide a hook on which those who secretly want to doubt may hang their doubts. Faith, it seems, cannot be perfected otherwise. It is our task now to overcome fully where that generation failed.

4. *Ellen White assigns a completely different reason "to a great*

degree" for the failure of Jones and Waggoner than usually applies to apostates:

> It is not the inspiration from heaven that leads one to be suspicious, watching for a chance and greedily seizing upon it to prove that those brethren who differ from us in some interpretation of Scripture are not sound in the faith. There is danger that this course of action will produce the very result assumed; and to a great degree the guilt will rest upon those who are watching for evil. . . .
>
> The opposition in our own ranks has imposed upon the Lord's messengers [Jones and Waggoner] a laborious and soul trying task; for they have had to meet difficulties and obstacles which need not have existed. . . .
>
> Love and confidence constitute a moral force that would have united our churches, and insured harmony of action: but coldness and distrust have brought disunion that has shorn us of our strength (Letter, January 6, 1893; *General Conference Bulletin,* 1893, p. 419).

When apostates leave the fellowship of God's people, abandoning doctrines they once held, our usual judgment is that "they went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us" (1 John 2:19). But the evidence in the case of Jones and Waggoner is not so. They *were* of us, for the Lord entrusted them with a most precious message. But to a great degree we are responsible, for our uncharitable judgment tended to produce the very result assumed.

5. *To permit ourselves in this late date to entertain prejudice or opposition toward the 1888 message because of the failures of the messengers is to enter into "a fatal delusion."*

> It is quite possible that Elder Jones or Waggoner may be overthrown by the temptations of the enemy; but if they should be, this would not prove that they had no message from God, or that the work that they had done was all a mistake. But should this happen, how many would take this position, and enter into a fatal delusion because they were not under the control of the Spirit of God. . . . I know that

> this is the very position many would take if either of these men were to fall, and I pray that these men upon whom God has laid the burden of a solemn work, may be able to give the trumpet a certain sound, and honor God at every step, and that their path at every step may grow brighter and brighter until the close of time (Letter S-24, 1892).

Unfortunately, Ellen White's prayer was not answered as she had hoped. Satan rejoiced, and those who rejected the message and the messenger triumphed. Many have entered into a fatal delusion for decades, feeling justified in neglecting or opposing those elements of truth that in God's design constitute the beginning of the latter rain and the loud cry.

Now the hour has struck for a more objective evaluation of evidence, that "there should be no more delay: . . . the mystery of God should be finished" in this our generation.

Chapter 7

Justification by Faith as Understood by the 1888 Messengers

If the 1888 message of justification by faith was the beginning of the latter rain and loud cry, reason compels us to recognize that it was truth more clearly revealed than had been *seen* by any previous generation of God's people since the former rain was bestowed at Pentecost. Speaking within the 1888 decade and in context unmistakably referring to the Jones-Waggoner message, Ellen White said:

> Great truths that have lain unheeded and unseen since the day of Pentecost, are to shine from God's word in their native purity. To those who truly love God the Holy Spirit will reveal truths that have faded from the mind, and will also reveal truths that are entirely new (*Fundamentals of Christian Education,* p. 473).

How could the 1888 message be a mere reemphasis of sixteenth-century concepts, important as the Reformers' doctrines were for their generation? Ellen White said that the 1888 message of justification by faith was "the third angel's message in verity" (*Review and Herald,* April 1, 1890). If the 1888 message of justification was the same as Luther taught, L. R. Conradi was right when he said that Luther taught the third angel's message in his day and that there is therefore no real justification for the existence of Seventh-day Adventists (see L. R. Conradi, *The Founders of the Seventh Day Adventist Denomination,* pp. 60-62).

Since the 1888 concept of justification by faith was recog-

nized as the third angel's message *in verity,* it follows that there must be something unique in it that sets it apart from popular evangelical ideas. If it is the same message proclaimed by theologians and evangelists of Sunday-keeping churches, then the question does become a serious one: What reason do Seventh-day Adventists have for existing? Do they have no distinct contribution to make concerning justification by faith? Or is their contribution only works? Has the Lord commissioned the popular churches to proclaim the *gospel* and Seventh-day Adventists to proclaim the *law?* Or at best, are Seventh-day Adventists merely a competitor on the gospel street, a me-too voice hawking virtually the same wares as others, like automotive competitors today whose cars are practically identical except in name?

The Jones-Waggoner message recognized that there are two phases of justification: (1) forensic, or legal, made for all men, and accomplished entirely outside of us; and (2) an effective transformation of heart in those who believe, and thus a justification *by faith*. Ellen White rejoiced in the uniqueness of their message, recognizing that it went far beyond the concepts of the Reformers or of contemporary Christians:

> The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. . . . It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. . . . This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure (*Testimonies to Ministers,* pp. 91, 92).

Let us note in brief what was their idea of justification by faith:

> The correctness of . . . [Paul's] statement that "the doers of the law shall be justified," is obvious. To *justify* means to *make righteous,* or to show one to be righteous. . . .
>
> Deeds done by a sinful person have no effect whatever to

> make him righteous, but, on the contrary, coming from an evil heart, they are evil, and so add to the sum of his sinfulness. Only evil can come from an evil heart, and multiplied evil cannot make one good deed; therefore it is useless for an evil person to think to become righteous by his own efforts. He must first be made righteous before he can do the good that is required of him, and which he wants to do. . . .
>
> The apostle Paul, having proved that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, so that by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified in his sight, proceeds to say that we are "justified [made righteous] freely by his grace. . . ."
>
> "Being made righteous freely." How else could it be? . . .
>
> It is true that God will by no means clear the guilty; He could not do that and still be a just God. But He does something which is far better: *He removes the guilt,* so that the one formerly guilty does not need to be cleared—he is justified, and counted as though he never had sinned. . . .
>
> The taking away of the filthy garments [in Zechariah 3: 1-5] is the same as causing the iniquity to pass from the person. And so we find that when Christ covers us with the robe of His own righteousness, He does not furnish a cloak for sin, but takes the sin away. And this shows that the forgiveness of sins is something more than a mere form, something more than a mere entry in the books of record in heaven, to the effect that the sin has been canceled. . . . It actually clears him from guilt; and if he is cleared from guilt, is justified, made righteous, he has certainly undergone a radical change. . . . And so the full and free forgiveness of sins carries with it that wonderful and miraculous change known as the new birth; . . . the same as having a new, or a clean, heart. . . .
>
> Again, what brings justification, or the forgiveness of sins? It is faith. . . . This same exercise of faith makes the person a child of God (*Christ and His Righteousness,* pp. 51-67).

A. T. Jones was in complete agreement:

> Justification by faith is righteousness by faith; for justification is the being declared righteous. . . . Justification by faith, then, is justification that comes by the word of God.

> . . . The word of God is *self*-fulfilling. . . . The word of God spoken by Jesus Christ is able to cause that to exist which has no existence before the word is spoken. . . .
>
> In man's life there is no righteousness. . . . But God has set forth Christ to declare righteousness unto and upon man. Christ has spoken the word only, and in the darkened void of man's life there is righteousness to every one who will receive it. . . . The word of God received by faith . . . produces righteousness in the man and in the life where there never was any before; precisely as, in the original creation. . . .
>
> "Therefore being justified [made righteous] by faith [by expecting, and depending upon, the word of God only], we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (*Review and Herald,* January 17, 1899).
>
> Men must not only *become* just by *faith*—by dependence upon the word of God—but *being just,* we must *live* by faith. The just man *lives* in precisely the same way, and by precisely the same thing, that he becomes just (*ibid.,* March 7, 1899).
>
> Here is the word of God, the word of righteousness, the word of life, to you *"now," "*at this time." Will you be made righteous by it *now?* Will you live by it *now?* This is justification by faith. This is righteousness by faith. It is the simplest thing in the world (*ibid.,* November 10, 1896).

The question immediately arises, Were these 1888 messengers correct when they said repeatedly and emphatically that justification by faith is *"making* righteous"? Or is this in reality a revival of the old Roman Catholic concept of justification by faith which is disguised justification by works?

Some assume that it is impossible that the believer ever *becomes* or is *made* righteous; he is only *declared* righteous when in fact he is not. To teach that justification by faith is *making righteous* has been said to be the insignia of Roman Catholicism itself.

Yet we have here what Ellen White endorsed as "the third angel's message in verity," the very heart of the 1888 message itself. If *this* is disguised Roman Catholicism, Ellen G. White was a misinformed, naive enthusiast, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church must remain in a state of tragic confusion.

Please bear in mind that Ellen White saw in this message a unique element:

> It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, *which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God*. . . . Therefore God gave to His servants a testimony that presented the truth as it is in Jesus, which is the *third angel's message,* in clear, distinct lines. . . . It presents the law and the gospel, *binding up the two in a perfect whole"* (*Testimonies to Ministers,* pp. 91-94, emphasis supplied).

Jones's and Waggoner's idea of justification by faith as "making righteous" was not the Roman Catholic idea of an infused righteousness poured into the "saint," creating in him an intrinsic merit on his own, so that his continued sinful deeds cease to be sinful because of his merit. The Roman Catholic idea (widely held by many others as well) is that sin ceases to be sinful in the "saint"; "concupiscence" is no longer an evil to be judged after the sacramental (or legal) justification takes place.

Jones's and Waggoner's teaching was that true justification by faith *makes a believer righteous in the sense that it makes him to be an obedient doer of the law.* As we saw above, they clearly recognized that millions of years of obedience on the part of the repentant sinner could never atone for his sin; he does not and never will have an iota of merit. But faith in Christ delivers him from his *captivity* to disobedience to the law, and sets him in the path of *obedience.* The faith that operates in genuine justification by faith is a working faith, and the atonement cannot be a true reconciliation with God unless it effects a corresponding reconciliation with the character of God, which is obedience to His holy law. Any so-called justification by faith which declares a man just who continues deliberately to disobey the law of God is a lie, for it has distorted both justification and faith and understands neither.

Let the 1888 messengers make their point clear:

"All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified [made righteous, or doers of the law] freely by his grace." . . . No one has anything in him out of which righteousness can be made. Then the righteousness of God is put, literally, *into* and *upon* all that believe. Then they are both clothed with righteousness, and filled with it, according to the Scripture. In fact, they then become "the righteousness of God" in Christ. And how is this accomplished? God declares his righteousness upon the one who believes. To declare is to speak. So God speaks to the sinner, . . . and says, "You are righteous," and immediately that believing sinner ceases to be a sinner, and is the righteousness of God. The word of God which speaks righteousness has the righteousness itself in it, and as soon as the sinner believes, and receives that word into his own heart by faith, that moment he has the righteousness of God in his heart; and since out of the heart are the issues of life, it follows that a new life is thus begun in him; and that life is a life of obedience to the commandments of God (Waggoner, *The Gospel in Creation*, 1894, pp. 26-28).

The Lord never makes any mistakes in his reckoning. When Abraham's faith was reckoned to him for righteousness, it was because it was indeed righteousness. How so? Why, as Abraham built on God, he built on everlasting righteousness. . . . He became one with the Lord, and so God's righteousness was his own (*ibid.*, p. 35).

Justification has to do with the law. The term means making just. Now in Rom. 2:13 we are told who the just ones are: "Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." The just man, therefore, is the one who does the law. To be just means to be righteous. Therefore since the just man is the one who does the law, it follows that to justify a man, that is, to make him just, is to make him a doer of the law.

Being justified by faith, then, is simply being made a doer of the law by faith. . . .

God justifies the ungodly. Is that not right?—Certainly it is. It does not mean that he glosses over a man's faults, so that he is counted righteous, although he is really wicked; but it means that he makes that man a doer of the law. The moment God declares an ungodly man righteous, that instant that man is a doer of the law. Surely that is a good

> work, and a just work, as well as a merciful one. . . .
>
> It will be seen, therefore, that there can be no higher state than that of justification. It does everything that God can do for a man short of making him immortal, which is done only at the resurrection. . . . Faith and submission to God must be exercised continually, in order to retain the righteousness—in order to remain a doer of the law.
>
> This enables one to see clearly the force of these words, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." Rom. 3:31. That is, instead of breaking the law, and making it of no effect in our lives, we establish it in our hearts by faith. This is so because faith brings Christ into the heart, and the law of God is in the heart of Christ. And thus "as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." This one who obeys is the Lord Jesus Christ, and his obedience is done in the heart of everyone who believes. And as it is by his obedience alone that men are made doers of the law, so to him shall be the glory forever and ever (Waggoner, *Signs of the Times*, May 1, 1893).

Perhaps we can begin to see why Ellen White was overjoyed with this message. She recognized that here is the "how" of the "what" of Revelation 14, which describes God's people in the last days as those who *keep* God's commandments. When she spoke of Christ's righteousness imputed by faith, this is what she meant. She was specifically not teaching a mere fictional-book transaction. She was speaking of something real, a "faith which worketh by love." And when she wrote her manuscript entitled "Danger of False Ideas of Justification by Faith," she was not refuting the message of Jones and Waggoner; she was upholding their message, and refuting the fictional view that they opposed:

> The danger has been presented to me again and again of entertaining, as a people, false ideas of justification by faith. I have been shown for years that Satan would work in a special manner to confuse the mind on this point. . . . The point which has been urged upon my mind for years is the imputed righteousness of Christ. . . . I have made it the

subject of nearly every discourse and talk that I have given to the people.

In examining my writings fifteen and twenty years old (I find that they) present the matter in this same light . . . living principles of practical godliness. . . .

[Ministers] should keep this matter—the simplicity of true godliness—distinctly before the people in every discourse. . . . Men are in the habit of glorifying men and exalting men. It makes me shudder to see or hear of it, for there have been revealed to me not a few cases where the home life and inner work of the hearts of those very men are full of selfishness. They are corrupt, polluted, vile; and nothing that comes from all their doings can elevate them with God, for all that they do is an abomination in His sight. There can be no true conversion without the giving up of sin, and the aggravating character of sin is not discerned. . . .

There is danger of regarding justification by faith as placing merit on faith. . . . What is faith? . . . It is an assent of the understanding of God's words which binds the heart in willing consecration and service to God, who gave the understanding, who moved the heart, who first drew the mind to view Christ on the cross of Calvary. . . .

The law of the human and the divine action makes the receiver a laborer together with God. It brings man where he can, united with divinity, work the works of God. . . . Divine power and the human agency combined will be a complete success, for Christ's righteousness accomplishes everything (Manuscript 36, 1890).*

Here we have a presentation in full harmony with the 1888 messengers. She recognized the new light sent by the Lord to prepare a people for the coming of Christ. Clearly she saw that

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*Ellen White's understanding of *faith* is crucial to understanding the 1888 message. In the *Review and Herald* of July 24, 1888, she wrote a priceless definition of faith:

"You may say that you believe in Jesus, when you have an appreciation of the cost of salvation. You may make this claim, when you feel that Jesus died for you on the cruel cross of Calvary; when you have an intelligent, understanding faith that his death makes it possible for you to cease from sin, and to perfect a righteous character through the grace of God, bestowed upon you as the purchase of Christ's blood."

the popular justification by faith of the Sunday-keeping churches was a perversion:

> While one class pervert the doctrine of justification by faith and neglect to comply with the conditions laid down in the Word of God—"If ye love me, keep my commandments"—there is fully as great an error on the part of those who claim to believe and obey the commandments of God but who place themselves in opposition to the precious rays of light—new to them—reflected from the cross of Calvary . . .
>
> Unconverted men have stood in pulpits sermonizing. Their own hearts have never experienced, through a living, clinging, trusting faith, the sweet evidence of the forgiveness of their sins. How then can they preach the love, the sympathy, the forgiveness of God for all sins. How can they say, "Look and live?" Looking at the cross of Calvary, you will have a desire to bear the cross. . . . Can any look, and behold the sacrifice of God's dear Son, and their hearts not be melted and broken, ready to surrender to God heart and soul?
>
> Let this point be fully settled in every mind: If we accept Christ as a Redeemer, we must accept Him as a Ruler. We cannot have the assurance and perfect confiding trust in Christ as our Saviour until we acknowledge Him as our King and are obedient to His commandments. . . . We have then the genuine ring in our faith, for it is a working faith. It works by love (*ibid.*).

Is this view of justification by faith Biblically correct? Let us look at a few scriptures:

1. *There is a legal or forensic justification that applies to "all men":*

> For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son. . . . God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. . . . Light is come into the world (John 3:16-19).
>
> In him [Christ] was life; and the life was the light of men. . . . That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world (John 1:4-9).
>
> God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself,

not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:19).

Our Saviour Jesus Christ . . . hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Timothy 1:10).

If one died for all, then were all dead: and . . . he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves (2 Corinthians 5:14, 15).

In due time Christ died for the ungodly. . . . While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. . . . When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son. . . .

If through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. . . . The judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. . . . As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life (Romans 5:6-18).

All alike have sinned, and are deprived of the divine splendour, and all are justified by God's free grace alone, through his act of liberation in the person of Christ Jesus (Romans 3:23, 24, NEB*).

It would be well to analyze these texts as Jones and Waggoner understood them:

A. Christ did something for every human being when He gave Himself for the world. He brought *two* gifts to light by His infinite sacrifice: life *and* immortality.

B. Life has been given to mankind, for all who come into the world, whether or not they believe in Christ or know of Him. One died for all, and had He not done so, all would be dead. Never has a human breath been drawn since Adam's fall except by virtue of the sacrifice of Christ. All men owe even their physical existence to Christ and are infinitely and eternally in debt to Him for absolutely everything they have, with

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the sole exception of the grave. This alone is ours by right; this alone we have earned. "The cross of Calvary is stamped on every loaf. It is reflected in every water spring" (*The Desire of Ages,* p. 660).

C. This gift of life being impossible apart from Christ, He is "the true Light, which lighteth every man" (John 1:9). "Never one, saint or sinner," has known a moment's joy or happy laughter in this world but as the purchase of Christ's blood, whether or not he knows the Source of his happiness. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us *all* (emphasis supplied)" and thus "the chastisement of our peace [for all] was upon him; and with his stripes we are [all] healed" (Isaiah 53:6, 5). "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matthew 5:45).

D. But since all men deserve nothing but condemnation and death, it is solely by "the grace of God, and the gift by grace," that human life "hath abounded unto many." The sacrifice of Christ has become effective for all men in that "while we were yet sinners [enemies], Christ died for us." Therefore, whatever Adam transmitted to his posterity, Christ has canceled out. He died for the ungodly. This is the only reason human life can continue.

E. Exactly as the offense abounded, so did "the free gift . . . [come] upon all men unto justification of life."

The New English Bible correctly translates Paul: "All are justified" (Romans 3:24).

F. Therefore the gospel does not tell men that they will be justified if *they* do something first, even if that something is to believe. The gospel tells all men that they are already justified, legally and forensically. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (2 Corinthians 5:19), and our work is simply to exercise the ministry of reconciliation and tell men so. He has committed unto us the *word* of reconciliation, the proclamation of news that is already accomplished.

G. It follows that the only difference between a saint and a

heathen is that the former has heard and believed the news and the latter has either not heard or disbelieved it. The Lord is actively working for the salvation of all men, and He "will have all men to be saved" (1 Timothy 2:4). All who do not resist will be drawn to Him. (It is, of course, possible to resist, and a great majority do so and will be lost.)

2. *Jones and Waggoner based their view of justification by faith on the truth that a heart-appreciation of the gift and sacrifice of Christ immediately works a transformation in the life.* In no way is this transformation of heart a salvation by works. Nor is it inherent or infused righteousness as taught by the Council of Trent. Faith itself involves a change of heart, a reconciliation to God. The enemy of God actually becomes a friend, through faith. The 1888 understanding of faith itself is rooted in Jesus' own definition (emphasis in texts supplied):

> God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish (John 3:16).
>
> Quite independently of law, God's justice has been brought to light. . . . It is God's way of righting wrong, effective through faith in Christ for all who have such faith—all, without distinction. For all alike have sinned, and are deprived of the divine splendour, and *all are justified* by God's free grace alone, through his act of liberation in the person of Christ Jesus. For God designed him to be the means of expiating sin by his sacrificial death, *effective through faith*. God meant by this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had overlooked the sins of the past—to demonstrate his justice now in the present, showing that he is himself just and also justifies any man who puts his faith in Jesus (Romans 3:21-26, NEB).
>
> Abraham believed God, and it [his faith] was counted unto him for righteousness. . . . To him that worketh not, but *believeth* on him that justifieth the ungodly, his *faith* is counted for righteousness.
>
> And therefore it [his faith] was imputed to him for righteousness (4:3-5, 22).
>
> Being justified by *faith*, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (5:1).
>
> The righteousness which is of *faith* speaketh on this

> wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? . . . or, Who shall descend into the deep? . . . The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, *the word of faith,* which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt *believe in thine heart* that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.* . . . So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (10:6-17).
>
> A man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the *faith* of Jesus Christ. . . . I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the *faith of the Son of God*. . . . I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain. . . .
>
> They which are of *faith,* the same are the children of Abraham. . . .
>
> Before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by *faith*. . . .
>
> We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by *faith* . . . *faith* which worketh by love (Galatians 2:16–5:6).

Let us analyze these scriptures, as Jones and Waggoner understood them:

A. Faith is the only proper response of the human heart to God's love. Faith cannot be mere intellectual assent to right doctrine or an egocentric grasping for security. Faith comes by the proclamation of the word of the cross. It is the heart-acceptance of this appeal: "Be ye reconciled to God," in direct response to the divine act of atonement in the sacrifice of Christ. God does the *loving* and the *giving;* we do the *believing*.

B. Therefore it follows that a heart-appreciation of the forensic, or legal, justification afforded by the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ is true justification *by faith*. For all men Christ has brought *"life* . . . to light," but only for those who *believe* has He brought *"immortality* to light."

C. Such faith constitutes a crucifixion of self with Christ.

With no thought of works of any kind, the believer joins Christ on the cross.

> When I survey the wondrous cross
> On which the prince of glory died,
> My richest gain I count but loss,
> And pour contempt on all my pride.

This is no painful struggle to yield self—this is an automatic act of identification. Only let the love of God shine through, only let the gospel be proclaimed in its purity free from adulteration, and the soul who believes will find no sacrifice difficult:

> Were the whole realm of nature mine,
> That were a tribute far too small;
> Love so amazing, so divine,
> Demands my life, my soul, my all.

D. Thus, for God to justify the ungodly does not mean that the *believing* heart is in a state of enmity and alienation against God. Faith presupposes a change of heart. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." There *is* a change of heart the moment a person believes! Believing *is* the change of heart! When the ungodly is justified by faith, his heart is melted: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." This passage in 2 Corinthians 5:17 is describing *justification.*

Jones and Waggoner went beyond the so-called Reformation view that justification by faith is merely a legal transaction taking place millions of light-years away, without respect to the heart of the believer himself. However much that justification by faith *depends* upon the legal substitutionary work of Christ outside of the believer, its very essence is a change within the believer. The *merit* on which justification by faith rests is never within the believer, but justification by faith itself is evident in the believer: "I am crucified with Christ" (Galatians 2:20). Justification *by faith* is distinct from forensic justification, though it is dependent upon it.

E. The believer's faith is counted for righteousness. Faith embraces the whole of Christ's righteousness. All the Lord asks from the sinner is true faith; He credits him with all the perfect righteousness of Christ. The 1888 view is not that faith equals righteousness but that God counts it for righteousness. It is far more than a mere legal transaction, paper work, as it were. "Faith is the *substance* of things hoped for, the *evidence* of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1, emphasis supplied). This so-called definition of faith can best be understood in the light of the imputation of Christ's righteousness: If a sinner has faith, God accepts it as an earnest, or down payment, the substance of things *God* hopes for. Only if the true nature of New Testament faith is understood can this magnificent imputation be effective (Romans 3:25, NEB).

God cannot permit the sinner to enter heaven if even the slightest remnant of sin mars his character, because the admission of even an amount the size of a tiny seed would grow until it again contaminated the universe. But if He waits until the sinner is sanctified before He justifies him, even eternity would not suffice for the process. And if He merely pardons sin in the sense of winking His eye at it, if He justifies the sinner by admitting him to heaven in an unbelieving state, He has merely perpetuated sin and cast contempt upon the sacrifice of His own Son.

But completely aside from works of any kind, God can be just and the justifier of the sinner who has faith, because faith is a true heart-appreciation of God's righteousness, effected by setting Christ forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood. Were there no blood, no cross, there could be no legal basis for justification; neither could there be any faith on the part of a sinner. The blood accomplishes both an objective and a subjective atonement.

But in that faith, even as a grain of mustard seed, lies the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. God delights to see it. "This is enough," He cries, and reckons it for righteousness, pronouncing the believing sinner righ-

teous through the merits of the Saviour, who is the object of the sinner's faith.

F. The Reformation view was necessarily limited by the prevailing egocentric radius of concern of that age. Embracing as the Reformers did the papal doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul,* they were unable to escape the limitations of that restricted radius. For the first time in Adventist history, and possibly for the first time in Christian history (at least since the apostles), Jones and Waggoner broke free from the tether of that egocentric concern in order to sense the greater concern of a true Christocentric view. This larger view was made possible for them, not by the perusal of commentaries or the works of Protestant Reformers or evangelical writers, but by their knowledge of the distinctly unique Seventh-day Adventist understanding of the cleansing of the sanctuary. All they had to do was to correlate the otherwise sterile doctrine of the cleansing of the sanctuary with the New Testament concepts of justification by faith, and they discovered the message that prompted Ellen White to her enthusiastic avowal, "Every fiber of my heart said Amen" (Manuscript 5, 1889).

G. While works have nothing to do with this justification by faith, they are inherent in the faith itself. Faith *works* by love. Jones and Waggoner were emphatic that salvation is by faith alone, but the faith they proclaimed *worked,* and the works were not a noun but a verb. If one has the all-important verb in the sentence of Christian experience, there is no end to the nouns that will be its objects, leading the believer (and the corporate body of the believing church) all the way into a preparation for translation at the coming of the Lord.

H. Thus sanctification is the ongoing and ever-deepening reality of justification by faith. There is no need to split hairs over subtle distinctions between the two and anathematize

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*Luther himself personally repudiated the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul. Nevertheless, the Reformers in general and Calvin in particular still adhered to this pagan-papal concept.

fellow Christians who don't agree on where the hairline distinction is or is not. No one can ever *claim* to be fully sanctified by faith—any tendency to do so immediately negates the reality of justification by faith. At any given moment from the beginning of conversion to the glorious experience of meeting the Lord when He comes, the believer trusts only in the imputed righteousness of Christ.

> Since I, who was undone and lost,
> Have pardon through His name and word;
> Forbid it, then, that I should boast,
> Save in the cross of Christ my Lord.

I. The message of Jones and Waggoner was the beginning of the latter rain and the loud cry—as such it swallowed up egocentric insecurity in a greater concern for the honor and vindication of Christ in closing the great controversy. Thus the focus shifted from concern over one's own personal security in depending on *imputed* righteousness to the larger one of a desire that Christ be pleased to see in His people a demonstration of *imparted* righteousness. In commenting on the 1888 message Ellen White said that the former is our "title to heaven," whereas the latter is our "fitness for heaven" (*Review and Herald,* June 4, 1895). The great clock of God had solemnly struck a note that had never sounded in the days of the sixteenth-century Reformers—the hour was late, and it was time that a Voice proclaim, "It is finished."

As we bow humbly at the foot of the cross where Jesus died, we are all like little children with an infantile grasp of its glorious significance. The widespread personal and denominational pride that permeates our life as a church, the constant tendency to honor and glorify fallible men and women, our infatuation with the pleasures and things of this world—all are indications of how little we understand or appreciate true justification by faith.

The remedy is not to find something more to *do* in the form of new works but something to *believe*. And no one can believe except with the broken, contrite heart. Our history, past

and current, tells us that we haven't yet learned the one needful lesson:

> God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world (Galatians 6:14).
>
> And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:1, 2).

NOTE:

Since Ellen White speaks much about "imputed " righteousness, it has been superficially assumed that she was supporting the so-called Reformation, or Calvinist, view of it as a mere legal declaration wholly outside the sinner. There are three comments we must make:

1. Candid scholars who have read much of Ellen G. White's writings recognize that she often uses "imputed" and "imparted" interchangeably. Heavy documentation can easily demonstrate this.

2. Her use of *imputation* is not limited in meaning to a mere legal declaration outside the believer. For example, there is this instance of a statement made during the height of the 1888-message enthusiasm:

> Righteousness of Christ imputed means holiness, uprightness, purity. Unless Christ's righteousness was imputed to us we could not have acceptable repentance. The righteousness dwelling in us by faith consists of love, forbearance, meekness, and all the Christian virtues. Here the righteousness of Christ is laid hold of and becomes a part of our being. All who have this righteousness will work the works of God. . . . The robes of Christ's righteousness never cover cherished sins. No one can enter into the marriage supper of the Lamb without the wedding garment on which is the righteousness of Christ (Letter 1e, January 14, 1890).

It is important to let Ellen White's own context determine our definition of her terms!

3. Her frequent phrase concerning Christ as our "Substitute and Surety" does not imply the popular Reformationist view limited to a legal or forensic substitution:

> We need not place the obedience of Christ by itself as something for which He was particularly adapted, by His particular divine nature, for He stood before God as man's representative and tempted as man's substitute and surety (Manuscript 1, 1892).

In her context, Ellen White firmly supports the Jones-Waggoner view of justification by faith.

Chapter 8

Sinless Living: Possible or Not?

To ask the wrong questions at the wrong time is bound to produce confusion. Whenever sinless living is mentioned, someone is bound to ask with a great show of finality: "Are *you* living without sin? Are *you* perfect? Can you show me somebody (except Christ) who *is* perfect?" Laughter usually punctuates the strained silence that follows these taunting questions.

But they are irrelevant to the topic of this chapter. It is obvious even to a child that no true Christian will ever *feel* or *claim* to be perfect. Not the proud Pharisee but the contrite publican is justified (obviously by faith, for there is no other way possible). And he prays, "God be merciful to me a sinner" (see Luke 18:10-14). Until Jesus glorifies His saints at His second coming, they "know that in . . . [them], (that is in . . . [their] flesh,) dwelleth no good thing" (Romans 7:18). No true Christian will ever claim more than Paul claimed: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect. . . . Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended" (Philippians 3:12, 13).

Never can we safely put confidence in self or feel, this side of heaven, that we are secure against temptation. . . . Our only safety is in constant distrust of self, and dependence on Christ (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 155).

It is not only at the beginning of the Christian life that this renunciation of . . . [pride and self-dependence] is to be

> made. At every advance step heavenward it is to be renewed. . . .
>
> The nearer we come to Jesus and the more clearly we discern the purity of His character, the more clearly we shall discern the exceeding sinfulness of sin and the less we shall feel like exalting ourselves (*ibid.*, pp. 159, 160).
>
> From the cross to the crown there is earnest work to be done. There is wrestling with inbred sin; there is warfare against outward wrong (*Review and Herald,* November 29, 1887).

We should begin asking the right questions at the right time. And the right time is this time of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, while our great High Priest is completing His work of final atonement. Christ is to accomplish a work unique in human history, since sin began. While no child of God will ever *claim* to have overcome all sin, and while it is equally true that we cannot judge of any present or past individual (except Christ) that he has overcome as He overcame, that does not mean that the ministry of Christ in the most holy apartment will fail to achieve such results. However much in the past or in the present we have failed to overcome, for us to say that it is *impossible* to overcome sin through faith in the Redeemer is actually to justify and to encourage sin, and to stand on the great enemy's side.

The right questions to ask are, Is the sacrifice of Christ as Lamb of God, and is His ministry as great High Priest, powerful enough to save His people *from* (not in) their sins? Is He truly able to save to the uttermost [completely] those who come unto God by Him? Will He be truly successful "as a refiner and purifier of silver . . . [to] purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness" (Malachi 3:3)? When Christ comes the second time, will He find a people of whom it can honestly be said, "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus"?

If the Lord wants to, He can create "a new thing in the earth," says Jeremiah (31:22); and what He wants to accom-

plish is the preparation of a people for the second coming of Christ. For the first time in human history, a divine announcement is made, "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that *keep* the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12, emphasis supplied). And the next event is the coming of the Lord (verse 14).

To say that these saints don't really keep the commandments, but God pretends that they do, is to violate the context of the three angels' messages. Heaven declares these people to be "virgins. . . . They . . . follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. . . . In their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God" (verses 4, 5). We know they are sinful by nature, "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). But in order for this pronouncement to make any sense, the faith of Jesus has worked, and they must have ceased to continue sinning. *They have overcome even as Christ overcame* (Revelation 3:21). To try to insert this prophetic glimpse of an overcoming people into the post-Second Advent future is to violate the context completely. It is clear from Revelation 15:2 that this same group have gotten the victory *before* the close of human probation.

Previous generations have never been able clearly to understand the truth of Christian perfection without falling into the errors of perfectionism, for the reason that the hour for the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary had not yet struck. When we come to the "days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets" (Revelation 10:7). Here is the special contribution that Seventh-day Adventists are to make to the completion of the great Reformation and the fulfillment of the gospel commission. There must be a joining together of the truth of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the truth of justification by faith. And it is here that we begin to sense the real significance of the 1888 message as the Lord sent it to His people.

The 1888 message was one of glorious hope, free both from fanaticism and the errors of perfectionism. Both messengers, from the beginning of the 1888 era, were clear and emphatic that sinless living *is* possible, that God's people *can* overcome even as Christ overcame, and that the key to this glorious possibility lies in His people's faith in the ministry of the High Priest in the most holy apartment.

The first three sentences of Waggoner's *Christ and His Righteousness,* page 5, neatly summarize their concept of sinless living. They are the acorn of a truth that grew into a mighty oak:

> In the first verse of the third chapter of Hebrews we have an exhortation which comprehends all the injunctions given to the Christian. It is this: "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." To do this as the Bible enjoins, to consider Christ continually and intelligently, just as He is, will transform one into a perfect Christian, for "by beholding we become changed."

Built securely on Luther's concept of justification by faith, Jones and Waggoner together set forth three essential elements of the uniqueness of the three angels' messages. Here is where the 1888 message goes further than the sixteenth-century Reformers were able to go in their day:

1. The believer is called to "consider the . . . High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" in His work of cleansing the sanctuary in the antitypical Day of Atonement which began in 1844.

2. To consider Christ continually and intelligently, just as He is, is to consider the true New Testament teaching that His role as Substitute and Example required Him to take the nature of fallen man, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and thus be *able* to succor them that are tempted.

3. Faith in such a Saviour and High Priest will transform one into a perfect Christian. Note the word *transform*. Not only will the true believer be counted or legally reckoned such; he will actually become a perfect Christian by faith.

Let us see how Jones's teaching was in full harmony with Waggoner's. In *The Consecrated Way to Christian Perfection,* first published as *Review and Herald* articles in 1898 and 1899, he states it simply and powerfully:

> In His coming in the flesh—having been made in all things like unto us, and having been tempted in all points like as we are—He has identified Himself with every human soul just where that soul is. And from the place where every human soul is, He has consecrated for that soul a new and living way through all the vicissitudes and experiences of a whole lifetime, and even through death and the tomb, into the holiest of all, at the right hand of God for evermore. . . .
>
> And this "way" He has consecrated for *us.* He, having become one of us, has made this way *our* way; it belongs to us. He has endowed every soul with divine *right* to walk in this consecrated way; and by His having done it Himself in the flesh—in our flesh—He has made it possible, yea, He has given actual assurance, that every human soul *can* walk in that way, in all that that way is; and by it enter fully and freely into the holiest of all. . . .
>
> He has made and consecrated a way by which, *in Him,* every believer can in this world, and for a whole lifetime, live a life holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and as a consequence be made with Him higher than the heavens (pp. 83, 84).

Immediately the question will arise, Is this the heresy of perfectionism? Jones clearly states that it is not:

> Perfection, perfection of character, is the Christian goal—perfection attained in human flesh in this world. Christ attained it in human flesh in this world, and thus made and consecrated a way by which, *in Him,* every believer can attain it. He, having attained it, has become our great High Priest, by His priestly ministry in the true sanctuary to enable us to attain it (*ibid.,* p. 84).

We must clearly distinguish between "perfection of *character* . . . attained *in* human flesh" and fanatical perfectionism that is assumed to be *of* human flesh. Perfectionism is a heresy characterized by one or more of the following false ideas:

1. The eradication of man's sinful nature at any time prior to glorification at the second coming of Christ.

2. Perfect restoration of mental or physical powers while man is still mortal.

3. Perfection of the flesh.

4. Living without God's enabling grace.

5. An infusion of intrinsic merit, trusting to an inherent holiness or righteousness.

6. Claiming to be saved through some superior holiness.

7. Claiming to have, or trusting in, feeling or impressions that supersede the Word.

8. Believing that it is impossible to sin or to fall.

9. The assumption that one is secure spiritually because of a purely legal justification while continuing to live in transgression of the law of God.

10. The assumption that continued sin ceases to be sinful if one is saved or sanctified.

None of these false ideas is found in the 1888 message. But we do find a clear call to a preparation for the second coming of Christ. Ellen White recognized the call. Speaking of the message of Waggoner and Jones, she said:

> This message [of Waggoner and Jones] was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, *which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God.* . . . It is the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure (*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 91, 92, emphasis supplied).

Often Ellen White declared that a secret love of sin was the real reason for the rejection of that message. Waggoner tells us that he was indebted to both Luther and Wesley for his understanding; and Wesley clearly taught the possibility of sinless living in mortal flesh. The terrible opposition that Wesley had

to meet prefigured that which Jones and Waggoner had to meet. Wesley said of the conflict in his day:

> There is scarce any expression in Holy Writ, which has given more offence than this. The word *perfect* is what many cannot bear. The very sound of it is an abomination to them; and whosoever preaches perfection (as the phrase is) that is, asserts that it is attainable in this life, runs great hazard of being acccounted by them worse than a heathen man, or a publican (*Works of Wesley,* Vol. 6, p. 1).
>
> "No," says a great man [Zinzendorf], "this is the error of errors: I hate it from my heart. I pursue it through all the world with fire and sword." Nay, why so vehement? . . . Why are those that oppose salvation from sin (few excepted) so eager, I had almost said, furious? . . . In God's name, why are you so fond of sin? What has it ever done you? What good is it ever likely to do you, either in this world, or in the world to come? And why are you so violent against those that hope for a deliverance from it? (*ibid.,* p. 424).

Wesley in his day was probably unable to understand the problem in its ultimate perspective. But those who live in the last days will know that the dragon is "wroth with the woman, and . . . [goes] to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." What makes Satan so angry is that there *will* be a people who truly keep the commandments of God.

In fact, the law of God has always been the focus of his warfare, for he has always said of fallen man, "It is impossible for us to obey its precepts" (*The Desire of Ages,* p. 24). Wesley had to contend with what Ellen White declares we have "to contend with—a strange power opposed to the idea of attaining the perfection that Christ holds out" (*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* Vol. 6, p. 1098). As in Wesley's day, she says many ministers today echo the falsehoods of Satan:

> Satan declared that it was impossible for the sons and daughters of Adam to keep the law of God, and thus charged

> upon God a lack of wisdom and love. If they could not keep the law, then there was fault with the Lawgiver. Men who are under the control of Satan repeat these accusations against God, in asserting that men can not keep the law of God. . . .
>
> [But] Christ took human nature upon him, and became a debtor to do the whole law in behalf of those whom he represented. Had he failed in one jot or tittle, he would have been a transgressor of the law, and we would have had in him a sinful, unavailing offering. But he fulfilled every specification of the law, and condemned sin in the flesh; yet many ministers repeat the falsehoods of the scribes, priests, and Pharisees, and follow their example in turning the people away from the truth.
>
> God was manifested in the flesh to condemn sin in the flesh, by manifesting perfect obedience to all the law of God. Christ did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. He corrupted not human nature, and, though in the flesh, he transgressed not the law of God in any particular. More than this, he removed every excuse from fallen man that he could urge for a reason for not keeping the law of God. . . .
>
> This testimony concerning Christ plainly shows that he condemned sin in the flesh. No man can say that he is hopelessly subject to the bondage of sin and Satan. Christ has assumed the responsibilities of the human race. . . . He testifies that through his imputed righteousness the believing soul shall obey the commandments of God (*Signs of the Times,* January 16, 1896).

The date of this straightforward statement indicates that Ellen White was firmly supporting the message of Jones and Waggoner. But had their message been in the slightest degree tainted by perfectionism, she would certainly not have so supported them. Note that Christ's imputed righteousness accomplishes more than a mere judicial declaration. It actually *makes the believer obedient.*

The *how* of this glorious achievement of perfection of character is made clear by something Ellen White said over ten years later (1907):

> [Christ] made an offering so complete that through his grace every one may reach the standard of perfection. Of

those who receive his grace and follow his example it will be written in the book of life, "Complete in him—without spot or stain."

In word and deed Christ's followers are to be pure and true. In this world—a world of iniquity and corruption—Christians are to reveal the attributes of Christ. All they do and say is to be free from selfishness. Christ desires to present them to the Father "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," purified through his grace, bearing his likeness.

In his great love, Christ surrendered himself for us. . . . We are to surrender ourselves to him. When this surrender is entire, Christ can finish the work he began for us by the surrender of himself. Then he can bring us to complete restoration (*Review and Herald,* May 30, 1907).

Obviously perfection of character is not something that is only a legal declaration; it is something Christ desires, and which therefore has not yet been realized in His people. There is a time element involved, a condition: "When [our] surrender is entire, Christ can finish the work he began for us by the surrender of himself." And this "entire surrender" must precede "complete restoration," which includes translation without seeing death.

Here is where genuine righteousness by faith comes into its own. We cannot know how to make that entire surrender that is so vitally needed unless we truly understand the gospel. The 1888 message was the beginning of that divine provision for the latter rain.

No wonder Satan has hated the message and opposed it so assiduously. His cleverest opposition is obviously his subtle counterfeits of righteousness by faith. These can be readily identified because they invariably betray their common denominator—opposition to the law of God. This takes one of two forms: (1) declaring that the law of God has been abolished or changed; or (2) declaring the law of God impossible to obey.

Therefore any righteousness by faith that becomes a cloak for continued disobedience to God's law is a counterfeit. And

any messenger preaching a brand of righteousness by faith who himself breaks "one of these least commandments" and teaches men so must be an agent of deception (cf. Matthew 5:19).

Does the Bible teach the possibility of sinless living in our sinful nature? If Christ was sent "in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us," then the obvious answer is clear. Christ is our Substitute *and* Example. He demonstrated it once for all. He "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Peter 2:22). And of His people it shall be said, "In their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God" (Revelation 14:5). "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (verse 12). They will overcome "even as I also overcame" (Revelation 3:21), says Jesus. There is not a trace of perfectionism in this Scripture teaching, for no saint will ever overcome except through faith in the Great Overcomer, "the author and finisher of our faith." The overcomers accrue no merit to themselves, yet they gain everything by their faith. Christ "is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. *For such an high priest became us,* who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Hebrews 7:25, 26).

If we take away the high priestly ministry of Christ in the most holy apartment, this concept of preparation for the Second Coming disappears, and the impact of the Advent movement is reduced to a "me-too" echo of the teaching of the popular evangelical churches. Our unique message centers in the sanctuary ministry of Christ:

Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. Their robes must be spotless, their characters must be purified from sin by the blood of sprinkling. Through the grace of God and

> their own diligent effort they must be conquerors in the battle with evil. While the investigative judgment is going forward in heaven, while the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God's people upon earth. This work is more clearly presented in the message of Revelation 14 (*The Great Controversy*, p. 425).

There is no need to be afraid of standing in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. Remember that this holy God is our loving heavenly Father, and our Saviour. He is not seeking a way to keep us out of heaven; He is seeking a way to get us in! Our part is simply to cooperate with Him.

The Lord will have a people who "not even by a thought [can] . . . be brought to yield to the power of temptation":

> Now, while our great High Priest is making the atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ. Not even by a thought could our Saviour be brought to yield to the power of temptation. Satan finds in human hearts some point where he can gain a foothold; some sinful desire is cherished, by means of which his temptations assert their power. But Christ declared of Himself: "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." John 14:30. Satan could find nothing in the Son of God that would enable him to gain the victory. He had kept His Father's commandments, and there was no sin in Him that Satan could use to his advantage. This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble (*ibid.*, p. 623).

"Ah," someone says, "that is just what I was afraid of. I would rather die and go into the grave than stand through the time of trouble. I'm afraid I can't make it!" But if we feel that way, we are really being selfish, in two ways: We are depriving the Lord of the loyalty He deserves from us in these last days, and we are evading an experience and trial that someone else will have to endure in our place. If our entire concern is just getting to heaven, then we certainly are selfish. And those who reason that because the "underground route" is just as effective in the end as going through the time of trouble and experiencing translation are thinking only of themselves.

They may not realize it, but in reality they are seeking to *avoid Christ*. The paragraph that follows the one above makes this clear:

> It is in this life that we are to separate sin from us, through faith in the atoning blood of Christ. Our precious Saviour invites us to join ourselves to Him, to unite our weakness to His strength, our ignorance to His wisdom, our unworthiness to His merits. . . . It rests with us to co-operate with the agencies which Heaven employs in the work of conforming our characters to the divine model (*ibid.*).

There is nothing to be afraid of if only we are willing to "join ourselves to Him!"

When I came back from years of mission service in Africa I enrolled in a university class in advanced Greek translations. I soon began to fear that I could never keep up with that class. Day after day the class discussions seemed to roll like giant waves over my head. I went to the teacher and suggested, "I think I'd better drop this class—I can't keep up."

She told me, "I think you should hang on. Stay in the class, and I'll see that you get through." And she saw me through! Persistent, patient, determined, she helped me so much that in the end I not only passed, I got an *A!* She was an illustration of our Heavenly Teacher. If we'll stay in His class, it's *His* work to see that we pass—yes, that we get an *A*. His business is being a Saviour!

It is not by our own works and trying hard that our robes "must be spotless," our "characters . . . purified from sin." No; it is by "the blood of sprinkling." It is through the grace of God, which of course we receive not in vain. Our own diligent effort is always simply cooperating with the agencies that Heaven employs. "Through faith in the atoning blood of Christ" this marvelous work is to be accomplished.

And what is faith? According to John 3:16, it is our heartfelt response to God's loving and giving in our behalf. "Faith in his blood" (Romans 3:25) is the effectual agency in righteousness by faith. *It is a heart-appreciation of the love of God revealed in the cross of Christ:*

> Many accept Jesus as an article of belief, but they have no saving faith in him as their sacrifice and Saviour. They have no realization that Christ has died to save them from the penalty of the law which they have transgressed. . . . Do you believe that Christ, as your substitute, pays the debt of your transgression? Not, however, that you may continue in sin, but that you may be saved from your sins. . . .
>
> You may say that you believe in Jesus, when you have an appreciation of the cost of salvation. You may make this claim, when you feel that Jesus died for you on the cruel cross of Calvary; when you have an intelligent, understanding faith that his death makes it possible for you to cease from sin, and to perfect a righteous character through the grace of God, bestowed upon you as the purchase of Christ's blood (Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald,* July 24, 1888).

Do you begin to see something of the tremendous power of faith? Not that faith itself does anything—*Jesus* does it. But *righteousness* is by faith, and what it leads to is "to cease from sin, and to perfect a righteous character." No wonder Waggoner exclaimed in 1889:

> What wonderful possibilities there are for the Christian! To what heights of holiness he may attain! No matter how much Satan may war against him, assaulting him where the flesh is weakest, he may abide under the shadow of the Almighty, and be filled with the fulness of God's strength. The One stronger than Satan may dwell in his heart continually (*Signs of the Times,* January 21, 1889).

What does it mean "to cease from sin"? The answer is clear: It does *not* mean to cease from having a sinful nature or to cease from being tempted. It does *not* mean to cease from experiencing the consequences of a sinful heredity or to cease from feeling the tug of allurements from within or without that are the consequences of our having sinned. But it does mean that by the grace of Christ we can cease to *respond* to these pressures! It means that we can say No! to every temptation, within or without, and Yes! to the Holy Spirit. It means that we can truly become obedient to the law of God, so we can say with Christ, "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy

law is within my heart" (Psalm 40:8).

It does *not* mean pristine perfection *of* the flesh. Perhaps even Jesus as a carpenter sometimes missed the nail with His hammer and dented the wood instead. It would be foolish to define that as sin! Sin has to do with the will, with choice. Note the verbs of volition:

> The sin of evilspeaking begins with the *cherishing* of evil thoughts. . . . An impure thought *tolerated,* an unholy desire *cherished,* and the soul is contaminated, its integrity compromised. . . . If we would not *commit* sin, we must *shun* its very beginnings. Every emotion and desire must be *held in subjection* to reason and conscience. Every unholy thought must be instantly *repelled*. . . .
>
> No man can be *forced* to transgress. His own *consent* must be first gained; the soul must *purpose* the sinful act before passion can *dominate* over reason or iniquity *triumph* over conscience. Temptation, however strong, is never an excuse for sin (*Testimonies,* Vol. 5, p. 177, emphasis supplied).

Luther wisely said that we cannot keep the birds from flying over our heads, but we can stop them from building a nest in our hair. The Lord does not ask us to do more than our Saviour did. He too was "in all points tempted like as we are," but He chose constantly to say, "No!" to temptation: "I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 5:30). "No!" to sinful self and all its clamors, no matter how insistent—this we may constantly choose, by His grace. And this is precisely what New Testament faith leads one to do. "To consider Christ continually and intelligently, just as He is, will transform one into a perfect Christian, for 'by beholding we become changed' " (Waggoner, *Christ and His Righteousness,* p. 5).

Someone may ask, "Does this mean that God's people will merely overcome all *known* sin? Or will they overcome *all* sin, even that which is now unknown to them?" Jones and Waggoner clearly understood that Christ's "final atonement" ministry will enable His people to overcome *all* sin, even that

which is now unknown to them. The two greatest sins of all history were unknown sins: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34), Jesus prayed concerning those who crucified Him; and Laodicea's terrible sin of lukewarmness is due to a condition that Christ says the church is not aware of (Revelation 3:17). The Lord can never translate *sin* into His eternal kingdom, for if He did, such buried seeds would spring up anew and contaminate the universe.

At the 1893 General Conference session Jones explained the simple, practical ministry of the Lord in this time of the cleansing of the sanctuary:

> Well, now, let us carry that a little further. He [Christ] gave himself for our sins; but . . . he will not take our sins—although he bought them—without *our permission*. . . . The choice is forever with me as to whether I would rather have my sins than to have him, isn't it? [Congregation: "Yes."] . . . Then from this time henceforth can there be any hesitation about letting anything go that God shows is sin? Will you let it go when it is pointed out? When sin is pointed out to you, say, "I would rather have Christ than that." And let it go. [Congregation: "Amen."] Just tell the Lord, "Lord, I make the choice now; I make the trade; I make thee my choice; it is gone, and I have something better." . . . Where in the world is the opportunity for any of us to get discouraged over our sins?
>
> Now some of the brethren here have done that very thing. They came here free; but the Spirit of God brought up something they never saw before. The Spirit of God went deeper than it ever went before, and revealed things they never saw before; and then, instead of thanking the Lord that that was so, and letting the whole wicked business go, and thanking the Lord that they had ever so much more of him than they ever had before, they began to get discouraged. They said, "Oh what am I going to do? My sins are so great." . . .
>
> If the Lord has brought up sins to us that we never thought of before, that only shows that he is going down to the depths, and he will reach the bottom at last; and when he finds the last thing that is unclean or impure, that is out of harmony with his will, and brings that up, and shows that

> to us, and we say, "I would rather have the Lord than that"—then the work is complete, and the seal of the living God can be fixed upon that character. [Congregation: "Amen."] . . .
>
> Which would you rather, have the completeness, the perfect fulness, of Jesus Christ, or have less than that, with some of your sins covered up that you never know of? . . . How in the world can that seal of God, which is the impress of his perfect character revealed in us, be put upon us when there are sins about us? He cannot put the seal, the impress of his perfect character, upon us until he sees it there. And so he has got to dig down to the deep places we never dreamed of, because we cannot understand our hearts. . . . He will cleanse the heart, and bring up the last vestige of wickedness. Let him go on, brethren; let him keep on his searching work. . . .
>
> If the Lord should take away our sins without our knowing it, what good would it do us? That would simply be making machines of us. . . .
>
> We are always intelligent instruments—not like . . . a pick or a shovel. . . . We are *intelligent* instruments. We will be used by the Lord at our own living choice (*Bulletin,* pp. 404, 405).

This is what Paul speaks of when he says:

> How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Hebrews 9:14).

Ellen White firmly supports this tremendous idea. "Your circumstances have served to bring new defects in your character to your notice; but nothing is revealed but that which was in you" (*Review and Herald,* August 6, 1889). "His eye . . . searches every chamber of the mind, detecting all lurking self-deception" (*That I May Know Him,* p. 290). "Undiscovered traits of character . . . must come to light" (*Testimonies,* Vol. 7, pp. 210, 211). "God . . . reveals their hidden defects, . . . the moral machinery of their own hearts" (*ibid.,* Vol. 4, p. 85). "In the closing up of the great day of atonement . . . the remnant church . . . are fully conscious of the sinfulness of

their lives" (*ibid.*, Vol. 5, pp. 472, 473). See also how the sanctuary ministry is a type of removing previously unconscious sin from the heart (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 201, 202, 357, 358); the crucifixion of Christ is man's deepest, unconscious sin (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 58 and *Review and Herald*, June 12, 1900); and the final judgment will disclose the hidden content of the unrepentant sinner's unconscious mind (*Review and Herald*, November 10, 1896).

The relationship of this truth to the 1888 revelation of Christ's righteousness is very close:

> Christ was in *the place*, and he had *the nature*, of the whole human race. And in him meet all the weaknesses of mankind, so that every man on the earth who can be tempted at all, finds in Jesus Christ power against that temptation. For every soul there is in Jesus Christ victory against all temptation, and relief from the power of it. That is the truth (Jones, *General Conference Bulletin*, 1895, p. 234).

We must let Waggoner make clear that "victory against all temptation" in no way means "holy flesh" or "perfectionism":

> Now, do not get a mistaken idea. Do not get the idea that you and I are ever going to be so good that we can live independently of the Lord; do not think that this body is going to be converted. If you do, you will get into grave trouble and gross sin. Do not think that you can make corruption incorruption. This corruption will put on incorruption when the Lord comes; not before. . . . When men get the idea that their flesh is sinless, and that all their impulses are from God, they are confounding their sinful flesh with the Spirit of God. They are substituting themselves for God, putting themselves in his place, which is the very essence of the papacy (*General Conference Bulletin*, 1901, p. 146).

In the likeness of sinful flesh, Jesus lived a sinless life. And His commandment-keeping people will have His faith. Waggoner continues:

> He has condemned sin in the flesh, showing that even in

> sinful flesh he can live a sinless life. His perfect life will be manifested in mortal flesh, so that all will see it in the seven last plagues. . . .
>
> If this power could not be manifested before probation ends, there would be no witness to the people; it would not be a testimony to them. But before probation ends, there will be a people so complete in him that in spite of their sinful flesh, they will live sinless lives. They will live sinless lives in mortal flesh, because he who has demonstrated that he has power over all flesh lives in them—lives a sinless life in sinful flesh, and a healthful life in mortal flesh, and that will be a testimony that can not be gainsaid—a witness than which no greater can be given. Then the end will come (*ibid.*, pp. 146, 147).

Does this mean that God's people who have overcome even as Christ overcame will be "little Christs" assuming a blasphemous position in the last days? Such a contemptuous deduction is unjustified. Even though the 1888 messengers insisted that God will have a people who "copy the Pattern," they never in any way intimated that they would "*equal*" it. Christ as the infinite, eternal Son of God lived a life and died a sacrifice that can never be repeated throughout eternity. But though no ransomed sinner can ever *duplicate* His "act of righteousness . . . [that led] to acquittal and life for all men" (Romans 5:18, RSV), can none ever learn to *appreciate* it?

A worthless scrap of broken mirror can be cleansed and polished to reflect the brightness of the sun so as to dazzle one's eyes. But it would be ridiculous to think of it as equaling the sun. The bride of Christ is said specifically to be "bright as the sun" (Song of Solomon 6:10, RSV). But it is always only reflected light, its origin in Christ.

The important question is, Can the worthless scrap of broken mirror ever be cleansed and polished before Christ returns? Or better, Can one "hundred forty and four thousand" such broken scraps ever be polished until each reflects a unique facet of the Saviour's character, one precious corporate gem in which "he shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied"? Can each scrap at last be clean? Or must each

continue to be dirtied and contaminated with continued sinning?

If Jesus was "in every respect . . . tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15, RSV), will it be possible when He ceases His ministry as High Priest that His people also stop "sinning" while they are still in sinful flesh with a sinful nature? If the answer is yes, then it is possible that His bride can get ready for His coming. If the answer is no, then "the marriage of the Lamb" can never come and the Second Advent must cease to be a viable hope. The hope and courage of the 1888 message is expressed as follows:

> Somebody will form a part of that perfect kingdom of God. We may, or we may not—we have our choice. We can do as we please; but that thing is going to be. There is going to be a people composed of representations of every tribe, and nation—white men, black men, yellow men, red men, poor men mostly—some rich men, a few great men, and a great many small men; men of all dispositions, and of all races and nationalities, all over the world—all speaking the same thing at the same time; all manifesting the characteristics of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is yet to be. Now if we believe and know that the thing must be, it can be done (Waggoner, *General Conference Bulletin*, 1901, p. 149).

When God has given this witness to the world of his power to save to the uttermost, to save sinful beings, and to live a perfect life in sinful flesh, then he will remove the disabilities and give us better circumstances in which to live. But first of all this wonder must be worked out in sinful man, not simply in the person of Jesus Christ, but in Jesus Christ reproduced and multiplied in the thousands of his followers. So that not simply in the few sporadic cases, but in the whole body of the church, the perfect life [character] of Christ will be manifested to the world, and that will be the last crowning work which will either save or condemn men (*ibid.*, p. 406).

Ellen White agrees with this courageous idea. Note this statement which occurs near the conclusion of *Christ's Object Lessons*:

> It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. . . . At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known. . . .
>
> Those who wait for the Bridegroom's coming are to say to the people, "Behold your God." The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them. The light of the Sun of Righteousness is to shine forth in good works—in words of truth and deeds of holiness (pp. 415, 416).

The thought of the Bridegroom looms large in the Bible picture of God's people anticipating the coming of Christ. "The righteous deeds of the saints" constitute the "fine linen" in which the Lamb's wife at last is arrayed (Revelation 19:8, 7, RSV). God's people become willingly, gladly obedient to His holy law. And there is something uniquely eschatological in this overcoming, applicable to the last generation. Not that the Lord has prohibited former generations from attaining "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," but simply that no former generation has in fact ever attained to the condition that Revelation postulates for the bride of Christ—His "bride has made herself ready" (19:7, RSV).

There is a great difference between a bride at a wedding and the little flower girl. Both are humans, and both are female; but one, to borrow Paul's phraseology in Ephesians 4, is no longer a child. She has attained to "the measure of the stature of the fulness" of her bridegroom in that she is at last prepared to stand at his side in sympathy and appreciation. She can now enter into his purposes and cooperate with him. She may never *equal* him, but unlike the little flower girl, she at least can *appreciate* him.

Has our Lord created us male and female and shared with us the mysteries of love in order to teach us the secret of His eschatological purpose for those who appreciate His great sacrifice? When His "bride has made herself ready," He will

come to claim her. The Bridegroom says, I "will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also" (RSV). In some sense, there must at last be a mutual love and sympathy, a oneness, a true union with Christ. *This was the real burden of the 1888 message.*

True Christian perfection is the development of faith in the hearts of God's people to the place where the little flower girl can "grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ" (Ephesians 4:15, RSV). "Some few in every generation" have apparently overcome in the sense of conquering self and reflecting a facet of Christ's character. Enoch and Elijah are obvious examples. But those few never met the full spectrum of temptation as God's people must meet it in the final scenes. The last generation will in a unique sense drink of the cup that Christ drank of and will be baptized with the baptism He was baptized with (cf. Ellen G. White, *Early Writings,* p. 284; *Testimonies,* Vol. 1, p. 183; and Matthew 20:20-23, RSV. See also S. N. Haskell, *Story of Daniel the Prophet,* pp. 253, 254, where he applies these words of Jesus to the believing ones during the time of Jacob's trouble after probation closes).

From Genesis to Revelation the Bible is one thrilling love story, with the tragic plot developing in the first three chapters and the climax of resolvement coming in the last four chapters. The victory was won in Christ's sacrifice; and all that His people have to do is to have faith in that tremendous accomplishment of their Lord.

Why has no previous generation or community of saints ever gotten ready for the marriage of the Lamb? Not because God withheld anything from them, any more than something is withheld from the flower girl to prevent her from being the bride. Prophecy indicates that a unique ministry of the great High Priest in the most holy apartment will be concurrent with the bride growing up and getting ready: "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed" (Daniel 8:14). On the typical Day of Atonement

anciently, something did happen *in type* to the people. The Lord said, "Atonement [shall] be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins you shall be clean before the Lord" (Leviticus 16:30, RSV). So on the antitypical Day of Atonement, the High Priest was to "purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they . . . [might] offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness" (Malachi 3:3). These will be offerings free from egocentric concern, the radius of sin itself. A true bride will not marry because she wants a meal ticket; she appreciates her husband and her concern is for him, not for self.

But at the present time the remnant church is more a flower girl at the wedding than a bride! Most Christians are acquisitive, concerned to get a reward, to get some of the cake or ice cream. Few are more concerned to be with Christ than to enjoy the creature delights of the New Jerusalem. This is why they so seldom bear their cross in service, to come after Him. Few feel a concern for the honor and vindication of the Bridegroom. "*I* shall wear a crown in my Father's house" is the ditty that we sing; seldom, "Crown *Him* with many crowns."

This true Christ-centered thought of concern for *Him* marks the presentations of the 1888 messengers, and uniquely so. Consider this example which is a "big idea"* seldom articulated in Seventh-day Adventist literature:

> We have seen that the little horn—the man of sin, the mystery of iniquity—has put his own . . . priesthood . . . in the place of the heavenly and holy priesthood. . . . In this priesthood and service of the mystery of iniquity, the sinner confesses his sins to the priest, and *goes on sinning*. Indeed, in that priesthood and ministry there is no power to do anything else than to go on sinning; even after they have

*The phrase is a quotation from Ellen G. White: "The . . . preciousness of truth is so large, why, it is so far-reaching, so deep, so broad, that self is lost sight of. . . . Preach so that the people can catch hold of big ideas and dig out the precious ore hid in the Scriptures" (Manuscript 7, 1894; *Evangelism*, p. 169). The phrase was coined during the enthusiasm of the 1888 era and doubtless was inspired by the Jones-Waggoner message.

confessed their sins. But, sad as the question may be, is it not too true that those who are not of the mystery of iniquity, but who really believe in Jesus and in His priesthood and ministry—is it not too true that even these also confess their sins, and *then go on sinning?*

But is this fair to our great High Priest, to His sacrifice, and to His blessed ministry? (Jones, *The Consecrated Way*, pp. 121, 122).

Love for Christ, concern for Him and for His glory—is it possible that we should ever in this life come to the place where this transcends our own concern for self and our own personal salvation? Can we ever learn, while in this mortal flesh, to appreciate a "perfect love [that] casts out fear"? Prophecy says yes. We read in Zechariah 12:10 that a time is coming when God's people will get their vision off their own problems and concern for their own security and begin to be concerned about Jesus. "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as when one mourns for his close, beloved friend" (LXX). The reason the remnant church is lukewarn is that we are motivated by egocentric concern. But there is a higher motivation: "The love of Christ constraineth us" (2 Corinthians 5:14).

Jones and Waggoner understood it. It was an important burden of their message. Jones continues:

> Is it fair that we should thus put Him, His sacrifice, and His ministry, practically upon a level with that of the "abomination of desolation," and to say that in Him and in His ministry there is no more power or virtue than there is in that of the "mystery of iniquity"? May the Lord forever save His church and people this day, with no more delay, from thus bringing down so low our great High Priest, His awful [awesome] sacrifice, and His glorious ministry (*ibid.*, p. 122).

When we learn a concern for Him and for His glory we shall see a new dimension in our familiar text: "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come" (Revelation 14:7). Because "the darkness of misapprehension of God

. . . is enshrouding the world," God's people will make "His character . . . to be . . . known," saying to the people, " 'Behold your God' " (*Christ's Object Lessons,* p. 415). Thus they will "give glory" to Him in the hour of *His* judgment (Revelation 14:7).

Most of us betray our deep inner sinfulness of motivation when we pray continually, "Lord, bless *me* and *my* loved ones, and don't forget *me* in Thy kingdom. And bless the missionaries so the work can be finished and *we* can go home to glory!" Surely it is time that we learn to pray a larger prayer of concern for the honor of Christ!

It is antinomianism to say it is impossible to obey God's law and that the imputed righteousness of Christ will cover our continued sinning in the sense of excusing it. It will not glorify our Saviour for us to "make . . . provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Romans 13:14). In a moment of sudden, alluring, and almost overmastering temptation, Joseph said, "No!" "He refused, and said, . . . How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:8, 9). Thus he honored the Lord who died for him. What a tragedy it would have been if he had "made provision for the flesh," and said to himself, "You can't win them all; this one is too strong; it's impossible to obey—Christ's righteousness will have to cover me on this one."

The important issue in the last days is not the salvation of our own poor little souls but the honor of Christ. "Fear God, and give glory to him" is the angel's call. The test that will come to God's people before the close of probation will be that of the mark of the beast, a test that has never in all previous history come to them, greater even than the ancient martyrs endured. It will be Satan's masterpiece, perfected after his six thousand years of experience in tempting the people of God. It will be cleverly designed to penetrate to the depths of our souls and if possible sweep us away in the final tide of iniquity. Such an ultimate test must require an ultimate preparation!

In the meantime, while we steadfastly deny Satan's cynical charge that it is impossible for the sons and daughters of Adam to keep the law of God, we remain keenly aware that we are fallen sinners by nature and we always need a Saviour. "My little children, I am writing this to you so that you may not sin; but if any one does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1, RSV). The Holy Spirit always presses good news home to the heart of the contrite sinner who has fallen:

> We shall often have to bow down and weep at the feet of Jesus because of our shortcomings and mistakes, but we are not to be discouraged. Even if we are overcome by the enemy, we are not cast off, not forsaken and rejected of God (Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ,* p. 64).
>
> Jesus loves His children, even if they err. . . . When they do their best, calling upon God for His help, be assured the service will be accepted although imperfect. Jesus is perfect. Christ's righteousness is imputed unto them, and He will say, Take away the filthy garments from him and clothe him with change of raiment. Jesus makes up for our unavoidable deficiencies (Letter 17a, 1891; quoted by Norval F. Pease, *By Faith Alone,* p. 241).
>
> If one who daily communes with God errs from the path, if he turns a moment from looking steadfastly unto Jesus, it is not because he sins wilfully; for when he sees his mistake, he turns again, and fastens his eyes upon Jesus, and the fact that he has erred, does not make him less dear to the heart of God (*Review and Herald,* May 12, 1896).
>
> If you make failures and are betrayed into sin, do not feel then you cannot pray . . . but seek the Lord more earnestly (Ellen G. White, *Our High Calling,* p. 49).

Here is a statement that could be easily wrested from its context to support Satan's charge that it is impossible for us not to continue transgressing God's law:

> When, through faith in Jesus Christ, man does according to the very best of his ability, and seeks to keep the way of the Lord by obedience to the ten commandments, the perfection of Christ is imputed to cover the transgression of the

repentant and obedient soul (*Fundamentals of Christian Education,* p. 135).

But now let us note the important context. We *can* overcome! On the same page and following we read:

We can see in the cross of Calvary what it has cost the Son of God to bring salvation to a fallen race. As the sacrifice in behalf of man was complete, so the restoration of man from the defilement of sin must be thorough and complete. . . . Besetting sins must be battled with and overcome. Objectionable traits of character, whether hereditary or cultivated, should be taken up separately, and compared with the great rule of righteousness; and in the light reflected from the word of God, they should be firmly resisted and overcome, through the strength of Christ (*ibid.,* pp. 135, 136).

Ellen White does not teach the subtle antinomianism that implies it is impossible to resist the mark of the beast completely. (Satan wants us to believe that, we may be sure!) "*If* any man sin, we have an advocate" (1 John 2:1, emphasis supplied). We shall have a Saviour forever, but inspiration tells us we shall not have an Advocate or an Intercessor forever (cf. *The Great Controversy,* p. 425).

To prepare a people to meet the test of the mark of the beast is the work of Christ as High Priest in His closing ministry. This was apparent to Ellen White even in the early days of the Advent movement:

As the ministration of Jesus closed in the holy place, and He passed into the holiest, . . . He sent another mighty angel with a third message to the world. . . . This message was designed to put the children of God upon their guard, by showing them the hour of temptation and anguish that was before them. Said the angel, "They will be brought into close combat with the beast and his image." . . . The minds of all who embrace this message are directed to the most holy place, where Jesus stands before the ark, making His final intercession for all those for whom mercy still lingers and for those who have ignorantly broken the law of God (*Early Writings,* p. 254).

Justification by faith in the light of Christ's closing mediatorial work in the most holy apartment—this is the Lord's provision to prepare His people to meet the test of the mark of the beast. This was the burden of the 1888 message; and this will be the topic of our last chapter.

Chapter 9

Why It's Easy to Be Saved and Hard to Be Lost (or Is It Vice Versa?)

There really ought not to be any question about something if Jesus says it. Faith in Him presupposes that what He says is true.

But if there is anything He said that seems to arouse questioning in the minds of many otherwise good Christians, it is that it's easy to be saved and hard to be lost:

> Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; . . . for my yoke is *easy*, and my burden is light (Matthew 11:28-30, emphasis supplied).

Apparently human nature is intent on believing that His yoke is *hard*. Many feel that being a true Christian is a fiendishly difficult undertaking, a heroic achievement that only a few can ever hope to realize! And of course such an idea tends to frustrate and discourage anyone who may sincerely desire to be a follower of Jesus.

This quotation from Jesus makes up only one half of our chapter title. The other half is derived directly from the words of Jesus found in Paul's report of a conversation he had with the Lord when he was arrested on the way to Damascus. Paul is telling King Agrippa about the experience:

> At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and

> saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is *hard* for thee to kick against the pricks. . . . I am Jesus whom thou persecutest (Acts 26:13-15, emphasis supplied).

Saul of Tarsus was having a battle with his conscience. The Holy Spirit pressed into his soul the constant conviction of sin. In order for him to have gone on in his mad campaign against Jesus and His followers, he would have had to repress and stultify all the convictions and promptings of the Holy Spirit. This was hard on him, and it could have led to severe physical and emotional disorders. The Lord loved him so much that He made it difficult for Paul to destroy himself through continued impenitence. And when Saul became the apostle Paul, he never forgot the lesson. Ever afterward he was to teach that it is easy to be saved and hard to be lost. He had discovered "Good News."

Thus, in the words of Jesus, His burden is "easy," and to oppose His salvation is "hard." Such is the meaning of "righteousness by faith," and the 1888 messengers caught the teachings of Jesus and Paul. This was another unique feature of their message, seldom articulated today.

For example, consider a passage from Paul that appears on the surface to be ambiguous:

> This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth [strives, contends] against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would (Galatians 5:16, 17).

There are two ways to understand this statement: (1) The evil that the flesh prompts us to do is so strong that even the Holy Spirit is powerless to help us, and we simply "cannot do the [good] things that . . . [we] would"; *or* (2) the good that the Holy Spirit prompts us to do becomes such a powerful motivation that the flesh loses its control over us, and the believer in Christ "cannot do the [evil] things" that the flesh prompts him to do by nature.

Explanation 1 is bad news. As long as you have a sinful nature, or as long as you are in "the flesh," you are doomed to continual defeat. And this is what many professed Christians really believe. Their experience constantly reinforces this belief, for they find the flesh all-powerful. Appetite, illicit sex, sensuality, pride, jealousy, hatred, drugs or liquor, materialism, constantly beat back the Spirit, and they find themselves defeated time after time. Surely the Saviour's heart goes out to them. He knows how many times they have wet their pillows with tears at night as they review the day's failures.

On the other hand, explanation 2 emerges as the best good news one can imagine. The Holy Spirit is actually doing the "work," the "striving." Whereas we always thought *we* had to do the striving, it turns out (according to Paul) that this is the part that the great Third Person of the Godhead does. He is stronger than the flesh. Every moment of every day He strives, or contends, against the promptings of our sinful nature, and *with our consent* completely defeats them. In fact, He spends as much time with each of us in this constant striving against sin as if we were the only person on earth. His striving against our sinful nature is a twenty-four-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week job.

Which of the two explanations is the correct one?

The 1888 message says, unhesitatingly, the good news one; for it is completely in harmony with the words of Jesus above. It is because Jesus knows that the mighty Holy Spirit does the lifting of the heavy weight that He assures us, "My burden is light." A. T. Jones discerned Paul's meaning:

> When a man is converted, and is thus brought under the power of the Spirit of God, he is not so delivered from the flesh that he is actually separated from it, with its tendencies and desires. . . . No; that same degenerate, sinful flesh is there. . . . But the individual is *no longer subject to these*. He is delivered from *subjection to the flesh*, with its tendencies and desires, and is now *subject to the Spirit*. He is now subject to *a power* that *conquers*, brings under, crucifies, and

keeps under, *the flesh*. . . . *The flesh itself* is brought *into subjection* to the *power of God*, through the Spirit, [so that] all these evil things are killed *at the root*, and thus prevented from appearing in the life. . . .

This blessed reversal of things is wrought in conversion. By conversion the man is put in possession of the power of God, and under the dominion of the Spirit of God, so that, by that power, he is made ruler over the flesh, with all its affections and lusts; and, through the Spirit, he crucifies the flesh with the affections and lusts, in his fighting "the good fight of faith." . . .

Jesus came to the world, and *put himself* IN THE FLESH, just where men are; and *met that flesh*, JUST AS IT IS, with all its tendencies and desires; and by the divine power which he brought by faith, he "condemned sin *in the flesh*," and thus brought to all mankind that divine faith which brings the divine power to man to deliver him from the power of the flesh and the law of sin, just where he is, and to give him assured dominion over the flesh, just as it is (*Review and Herald*, September 18, 1900).

Which is stronger, sin or grace? Paul says, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness" (Romans 5:20, 21). This has been difficult to believe. How often we have thought that the TV was stronger than prayer meeting! So often we find the world's hold on us so alluring that it seems to us by comparison that the work of the Holy Spirit is very weak. If so, something is not clear to us. We have not understood the gospel.

We turn again to the 1888 message for some good news:

When grace reigns, it is easier to do right than it is to do wrong. That is the comparison. Notice: As sin reigned, *even so* grace reigns. When sin reigned, it reigned against grace; it beat back all the power of grace that God had given; [That was Saul of Tarsus kicking against the pricks.] but when the power of sin is broken, and grace reigns, then grace reigns against sin, and beats back all the power of sin. So it is as literally true that under the reign of grace it is easier to do right than to do wrong, as it is true that under the reign of

sin it is easier to do wrong than to do right (Jones, *ibid.*, July 25, 1899).

It can never be repeated too often, that under the reign of grace it is just as easy to do right, as under the reign of sin it is easy to do wrong. This must be so; for if there is not more power in grace than there is in sin, then there can be no salvation from sin. . . .

Salvation from sin certainly depends upon there being more power in grace than there is in sin. Then, there being more power in grace than there is in sin, . . . wherever the power of grace can have control, it will be just as easy to do right as without this it is easy to do wrong. . . .

[Man's] great difficulty has always been to do right. But this is because man naturally is enslaved to a power—the power of sin—that is absolute in its reign. And so long as that power has sway, it is not only difficult but impossible to do the good that he knows and that he would. But let a mightier power than that have sway, then is it not plain enough that it will be just as easy to serve the will of the mightier power, when it reigns, as it was to serve the will of the other power when it reigned?

But grace is not simply more powerful than is sin. . . . This, good as it would be, is not all. . . . There is much more power in grace than there is in sin. For "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." . . . Let no one ever attempt to serve God with anything but the present, living power of God, that makes him a new creature; with nothing but the much more abundant grace that condemns sin in the flesh, and reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. Then the service of God will indeed be "in newness of life"; then it will be found that his yoke is indeed "easy" and his burden "light"; then his service will be found indeed to be with "joy unspeakable and full of glory" (*ibid.*, September 1, 1896).

As usual, Waggoner completely agreed:

The new birth completely supersedes the old."If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God." He who takes God for the portion of his inheritance, has a power working in him for righteousness, as much stronger than the power of inherited tendencies to

> evil, as our heavenly Father is greater than our earthly parents (*The Everlasting Covenant,* p. 66).

The context of Waggoner's quotation from 2 Corinthians 5 says, "The love of Christ constraineth [motivates] us" (verse 14). *Constrain,* the very opposite of *restrain,* means "to propel," "to push."

To illustrate, try to imagine that you are a poor ignorant slave resurrected from some remote past era before the age of modern cars. Your master has a big, heavy Cadillac at the bottom of a hill, and he commands you, "Take my Cadillac up to the top of the hill." So you begin the best you know how—to *push;* and after the utmost straining of every muscle, you manage to move it a few inches and then put a rock under a wheel to hold what you have gained. Panting, you wonder how you'll ever get it to the top of the hill. (Surely I don't have to point out that many Christians think of getting ready for the Lord to come as every bit that difficult.)

Then suppose someone comes and tells you to get inside the vehicle and turn a little key you will see there. You hear something humming under the hood, and wonder what it is, and your friend tells you to move a lever into the *D* position. Then he adds, "See that accelerator pedal on the floor? Press on it." The Cadillac zooms up the hill!

It is only a pathetic ignorance of the pure, true gospel of Christ that makes the Christian life seem so difficult. The constraining love of Christ is a mighty power plant that makes mountains become plains:

> Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain (Zechariah 4:6, 7).

It takes a powerful V-8 engine to flatten out steep hills like that. But that is just what an understanding of the cross does for us:

> For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he

> died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again (2 Corinthians 5:14, 15).

Analyze what this actually says:

1. If One had not died for us, we would actually be dead, all of us.

2. Whether we are heathen or Christian, whether we recognize our obligation to Him or not, all we have and are we owe to His sacrifice. Christ bought the world with His blood:

> To the death of Christ we owe even this earthly life. The bread we eat is the purchase of His broken body. The water we drink is bought by His spilled blood. Never one, saint or sinner, eats his daily food, but he is nourished by the body and the blood of Christ. The cross of Calvary is stamped on every loaf. It is reflected in every water spring (White, *The Desire of Ages,* p. 660).

3. Simply *believe* this, says Paul, and henceforth you find it impossible to keep on living a self-centered life. The constraint goes to work immediately, and it is inevitable that we shall "henceforth live . . . unto him which died for . . . [us], and arose again." ("*Should not* [emphasis supplied] . . . live unto themselves" in the Greek does not convey the idea of our usual vain exclamations, "I *should* be more faithful; I *should* pay more tithe; I *should* keep the Sabbath better; I *should* study my lesson more." The idea is that you will find it impossible *not* to serve the Lord enthusiastically once you comprehend and appreciate the real significance of the cross of Christ.)

This idea that it is easy to be saved and hard to be lost permeates Paul's teachings. Consider the following:

> Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? (Romans 2:4).

Paul's idea is that God takes the initiative. He is not standing back, as many conceive of Him, His divine arms folded in disinterested unconcern while we wallow in our lost condi-

tion. He is not saying, "Well, I made the sacrifice for you two thousand years ago; I've done My part—it's up to you now. You must take the initiative. If you want to come, come; and if it seems hard to you, you just don't have what it takes to be a Christian. Somebody else will take your crown." How many millions of people feel that way about God? And some shy and timid ones feel, "God *does* have plenty of people ready to take my crown—He doesn't need *me,* and I'm not really sure He *wants* me."

In contrast, Waggoner emphasizes the seeking, persistent love of God toward "every man," one of his favorite evangelistic phrases:

> And we need not try to improve on the Scriptures, and say that the goodness of God *tends* to lead men to repentance. The Bible says that it *does* [emphasis supplied] lead them to repentance, and we may be sure that it is so. Every man is being led toward repentance as surely as God is good (*Signs of the Times,* November 21, 1895).

When you pray for a loved one, a friend, or a neighbor to be converted, you don't have to awaken the Lord out of sleep or to persuade Him to do something He is unwilling to do—not according to what Paul says. The goodness of God is *already* working, leading your person to repentance. The trouble is we often hinder what He is already seeking to do! We thwart the real answer to our prayers because we haven't understood the goodness, mercy, and forbearance of the Lord in their true dimensions.

Now we continue from Waggoner:

> Not all repent. Why?—Because they despise the riches of the goodness and forbearance and long-suffering of God, and break away from the merciful leading of the Lord. But whoever does not resist the Lord, will surely be brought to repentance and salvation (*ibid.*).

That sounds revolutionary to many dear people who say, "Well, I just can't quite agree to that! It seems to me that if a sinner is going to be saved, he must take the initiative and

work hard at it—he must *do* something to be saved." But this has it backward. It says that if he stops resisting, he *will* be saved!

However revolutionary it sounds, that is the Good News of the gospel. It presupposes the active, persistent love of God. Ellen White says the same thing in *Steps to Christ,* page 27:

> As Christ draws them to look upon His cross, to behold Him whom their sins have pierced, . . . they begin to comprehend something of the righteousness of Christ. . . .
>
> The sinner may resist this love, may refuse to be drawn to Christ; but *if he does not resist,* he will be drawn to Jesus; a knowledge of the plan of salvation will lead him to the foot of the cross in repentance for his sins, which have caused the sufferings of God's dear Son (emphasis supplied).

Once you see the secret of the Lord's active, seeking love, this Good News begins to leap at you from almost every page of the Bible. Note these beautiful thoughts from Paul's writings:

> Before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. . . . Ye are all the children of God in Christ Jesus. . . .
>
> The heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: but when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons (Galatians 3:23–4:5).

With his clear view of "the law in Galatians," Waggoner has caught the real truth of this passage:

> God has not cast off the human race; therefore, since the first man created was called "the son of God," it follows that all men are heirs in the sense that they are in their minority. As already learned, "before faith came," although all were

> wanderers from God, we were kept under the law, guarded by a severe master, "shut up," in order that we might be led to accept the promise. What a blessed thing it is that God counts even the ungodly, those who are in the bondage of sin, as His children—wandering, prodigal sons, but still children. God has made all men "accepted in the Beloved." This probationary life is given us for the purpose of giving us a chance to acknowledge Him as Father, and to become sons indeed (*The Glad Tidings,* pp. 166, 167).

The usual idea that many have is that those who lived in Old Testament times were kept under the law but that faith came in New Testament times. But Waggoner makes clear that even today we are kept under the law until faith comes to us individually in our experience. The law is *our* schoolmaster, or disciplining agent, to drive *us* to Christ. What we do not learn by faith, by His grace, we learn by discipline. And all this infinite care lavished upon us individually is to conduct us to Christ, "that we might be justified by . . . faith." This is happening *right now*. Without exception, all of us are "shut up," "under the law," until we reach that place in life where faith "comes." This imprisonment is a part of the drawing process, another evidence of the Lord's persistent and active love for us individually.

It is so easy for us to draw a circle that shuts out our apparently unbelieving neighbors. But Waggoner discerned that the Lord draws a circle that *includes* them—at least until they finally beat Him off by never-ending resistance. So often we regard those outside our circle as wolves, not sheep; but the Lord looks upon them as sheep who have wandered away, or children who are minors. Seldom have we known how to recognize them as children of God, kept under the law indeed, but still children whom the schoolmaster is driving to Christ.

So Galatians 4 brings us this beautiful thought by the illustration of the child of the estate owner, who is heir of all things. But he runs around the estate barefoot, and the slaves boss him and lord it over him until he comes of age. So, says

Paul, with all of us—we are minors, urchins, underslaves until we reach our majority, which is the coming of faith to us individually. Amazing as it may seem, the Lord's entire program is geared to the saving of lost people!

This pulsating, throbbing evangel is further revealed in Waggoner's insight into God's gift of grace to every man:

> Since the inheritance is through the righteousness of faith, it is equally sure to all the seed, and equally within the reach of all. Faith gives all an equal chance, because faith is just as easy for one person as for another. God has dealt to every man a measure of faith, and to all the same measure; for the measure of grace is the measure of faith, and "unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Eph. 4:7. Christ is given without reserve to every man (*Signs of the Times,* February 27, 1896).

In other words, the Lord is actually doing something for every man, woman, and child on the earth. But His work is thwarted until they know it; and they can know it only as the Good News is proclaimed to them. He has urged us to "go . . . into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," and we need to understand that there is indeed power in that gospel if it can be freed from the poisonous error that has corrupted and frustrated the grace of God. If we have tried to help people and have failed, it is better that we recognize that our understanding of that gospel has been deficient, rather than to blame the people. It is true that some will reject it even when it is presented in its pristine purity. But many more than we see today will accept when it is clearly presented.

We find this virtual obsession with the grace of God running like a thread of gold though the writings of Jones and Waggoner:

> "For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, . . . was not yea and nay, but in Him was yea." For how many soever be the promises of God, in Him is the yea; wherefore also through Him is the Amen, "unto the glory of God by us" (2 Corinthians 1:19, 20). No promise of God has ever been given to man except through Christ.

> Personal faith in Christ is the one thing necessary in order to receive whatever God has promised. God is no respecter of persons: He offers His riches freely to everybody; but no one can have any part in them except as he receives Christ. This is perfectly fair, since Christ is given to all if they will but have Him (Waggoner, *The Everlasting Covenant*, p. 46).

Ellen White agrees with this concept thus:

> Christ and His mission have been misrepresented, and multitudes feel that they are virtually shut away from the ministry of the gospel. But let them not feel that they are shut away from Christ. There are no barriers which man or Satan can erect but that faith can penetrate.
>
> In faith the woman of Phoenicia flung herself against the barriers that had been piled up between Jew and Gentile. Against discouragement, regardless of appearances that might have led her to doubt, she trusted the Saviour's love. It is thus that Christ desires us to trust in Him. The blessings of salvation are for every soul. Nothing but his own choice can prevent any man from becoming a partaker of the promise in Christ by the gospel (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 403).

Yes, the sinner must *resist* in order to be lost! That is how much the Lord loves him.

But the 1888 message took a giant step beyond the idea that it is easier to be saved than to be lost, in view of the gospel. It found in Paul's writings clear assurance that the death of Christ on the cross not only *offers* the sinner a provision for his salvation, but it has actually effected his justification. The death and resurrection of Christ, and His gift of the Holy Spirit, have done something for every man. Let us look at what Paul says first and then at Jones's and Waggoner's comments:

> Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: . . . therefore as by the offence of one [Adam] judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one [Christ] the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's [Adam's] disobedience many were made sinners, so

> by the obedience of one [Christ] shall many be made righteous (Romans 5:12-19).

Whatever it was that Adam passed on to the human race, Paul makes clear that Christ canceled it for all men. But we have found it hard to believe what Paul says. We say, "No, Paul, that cannot be true. The free gift of justification came upon a *few* people, not all. It only came upon those who *do* something." Waggoner seems to have gotten Paul's idea:

> There is no exception here. As the condemnation came upon all, so the justification comes upon all. Christ has tasted death for every man. He has given himself for all. Nay, he has given himself *to* every man. The free gift has come upon all. The fact that it is a free gift is evidence that there is no exception. If it came upon only those who have some special qualification, then it would not be a free gift. It is a fact, therefore, plainly stated in the Bible, that the gift of righteousness and life in Christ has come to every man on earth. There is not the slightest reason why every man that has ever lived should not be saved unto eternal life, except that they would not have it. So many spurn the gift offered so freely (*Signs of the Times,* March 12, 1896).

However strange those words may sound to us today, they are in harmony with what the apostle Paul himself says. No wonder that Ellen White was so enthusiastic about the message! It was Good News, and it presented the character of God in a new and more favorable light. Waggoner says again:

> The faith of Christ must bring the righteousness of God, because the possession of that faith is the possession of the Lord himself. This faith is dealt to every man, even as Christ gave himself to every man. Do you ask what then can prevent every man from being saved? The answer is, Nothing, except the fact that all men will not keep the faith. If all would keep all that God gives them, all would be saved (*ibid.,* January 16, 1896).

There is so much that the sinner must resist if he insists on being lost! No wonder it is hard.

And the requisite motivation to live a truly consecrated life

is abundantly provided by the simple appreciation of the truth of this justification that has come upon all men:

> The love of Christ constraineth [motivates] us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again (2 Corinthians 5:14, 15).

Paul's intent seems so clear that one wonders how Calvin could ever have entertained the idea that Christ died only for the elect. Simply believe that He died for *you,* and forthwith you recognize that you have nothing of your own. You are infinitely and eternally in debt to Him. Thus it becomes impossible henceforth to live a self-centered life. The equation "one died for all, then were all dead" has its own built-in power supply. Simply *believe* the astounding truth, and it becomes easy to be saved.

Having seen that Scripture fully supports Jones's and Waggoner's big ideas of gospel motivation, it remains to be seen how Ellen White supports them. She has the same idea:

> Infinite Love has cast up a pathway upon which the ransomed of the Lord may pass from earth to heaven. That path is the Son of God. Angel guides are sent to direct our erring feet. Heaven's glorious ladder is let down in every man's path, barring his way to vice and folly. He must trample upon a crucified Redeemer ere he can pass onward to a life of sin (*Our High Calling,* p. 11).

That God's love is active and seeking, that it must be resisted in order for the sinner to be lost, is implicit in her writings:

> God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If there were no light, there would be no shade. But while the shade comes by the sun, it is not created by it. It is some obstruction that causes the shadow. So darkness emanates not from God. . . . Disregard of the light that God has given brings the sure result. It creates a shadow, a darkness that is more dark because of the light which has been sent. . . .

"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Gal. 6:7. God destroys no man. Every man who is destroyed will destroy himself. When a man stifles the admonitions of conscience, he sows the seeds of unbelief and these produce a sure harvest (*ibid.*, p. 26).

Seventh-day Adventists have been accused, and sometimes rightfully so, of teaching that Christ will be full of murderous vengeance and bloodthirstiness when He returns the second time. Evangelists have represented Christ as coming with some kind of mysterious cosmic machine gun that emits a lethal ray to murder all His enemies. But the 1888 message presented no such distortion of God's character. It will be this same Jesus who returns a second time. Sinners will have changed, not He. They will be hardened, not He.

If one smokes six or eight packs of cigarettes a day for years and then comes down with lung cancer, can he say, "God has destroyed me"? Truly, every man who is destroyed will destroy himself.

Note how in one short paragraph alone Ellen White says seven times that the unsaved are lost solely because of their own choice and not through any arbitrary expulsion inflicted on them by the Lord:

[1] A life of rebellion against God has unfitted them for heaven. [2] Its purity, holiness, and peace would be torture to them; [3] The glory of God would be a consuming fire. [4] They would long to flee from that holy place. [5] They would welcome destruction, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them. [6] The destiny of the wicked is fixed by their own choice. [7] Their exclusion from heaven is voluntary with themselves, and just and merciful on the part of God (*The Great Controversy*, p. 543).

If we eclipse the cross of Christ, then we must admit that it becomes terribly hard to be saved. Motivation to consecration and devotion dries up. Temptation to evil becomes overpowering in its appeal. The Saviour becomes "a root out of a dry ground," and His gospel contains "no beauty that we

should desire him." This is the "Christian experience" of many church members. But if we understand the unadulterated gospel of His grace, Jones says, even *the choice* to bear the cross with Christ becomes easy. And for sure, this matter of choice is the only possibly difficult thing in being saved. If even *that* becomes easy in view of Christ's cross, surely we have it made!

> If the Lord has brought up sins to us that we never thought of before, that only shows that he is going down to the depths, and he will reach the bottom at last; and when he finds the last thing that is unclean or impure, that is out of harmony with his will, and brings that up, and shows that to us, and we say, "I would rather have the Lord than that"—then the work is complete, and the seal of the living God can be fixed upon that character. [Congregation: "Amen."] Which would you rather, have a character—— [Someone in the congregation began praising the Lord and others began to look around.] Never mind. If lots more of you would thank the Lord for what you have got, there would be more joy in this house to-night.
>
> Which would you rather, have the completeness, the perfect fulness, of Jesus Christ, or have less than that, with some of your sins covered up that you never know of? [Congregation: "His fulness."] But don't you see, the Testimonies have told us that if there be stains of sin there, we cannot have the seal of God. How in the world can that seal of God, which is the impress of his perfect character revealed in us, be put upon us when there are sins about us? . . . And so he has got to dig down to the deep places we never dreamed of, because we cannot understand our hearts. . . . He will cleanse the heart, and bring up the last vestige of wickedness. Let him go on, brethren; let him keep on his searching work. . . .
>
> It is simply with you and me a living choice, as to whether we will have the Lord or ourselves, the Lord's righteousness or our sins, the Lord's way or our way. Which will we have? [Congregation: "The Lord's way."] There is no . . . [difficulty] in making the choice when we know what the Lord has done, and what he is to us. The choice is easy. Let the surrender be complete (Jones, *General Conference Bulletin,* 1893, p. 404).

Waggoner agreed: One has to fight the truth in order to make it "hard" to believe:

> It is as natural for the child of the infidel to believe as it is for the child of the saint. It is only when men build up a barrier of pride about themselves (Ps. 73:6) that they find it difficult to believe (*Signs of the Times,* August 6, 1896).

Now let Jones, in his forthright, homely way, urge the truth home:

> Can a man live on what he died of?—No. Then when the man has died of sin, can he live in sin? . . . A man dies of delirium tremens or typhoid fever. Can he live on delirium tremens or typhoid fever, even if by a possibility he should be brought to live long enough to realize that he was there? The very thought of it would be death to him, because it killed him once. So it is with the man who dies of sin. . . . He cannot live on what he died of.
>
> But the great trouble with many people is that they do not get sick enough of sin to die. . . .They get sick perhaps of some *particular* sin, and they want to stop that, and "want to die" to that, and they think they have left that off. Then they get sick of some other particular sin that they think is not becoming to them—they cannot have the favor and the estimation of the people with that particular sin so manifest, and they try to leave that off. But they do not get sick of sin—sin in itself, sin in the conception, sin in the abstract, whether it be in one particular way or another particular way. They do not get sick enough of sin itself to die to sin. When the man gets sick enough . . . of *sin,* . . . you cannot get him to live in it any more (*General Conference Bulletin,* 1895, p. 352).

And what supplies the power thus to die to sin? Yes, the cross of Christ. Jones continues:

> We have constantly the opportunity to sin. Opportunities to sin are ever presented to us . . . day by day. But it stands written: "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus." "I die daily." . . . The suggestion of sin is death to me . . . *in him.*
>
> Therefore this is put in the form of a surprised, astonished question: "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any

> longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" . . .
>
> "For sin shall not have dominion over you." The man who is delivered from the dominion of sin is delivered from the service of sin. . . . Jesus died, and we are dead with him. And he is alive; and we who believe in him are alive with him. . . . "I am crucified with him." As certainly as he is crucified, I am crucified; as certainly as he is dead, I am dead with him; as certainly as he is buried, I was buried with him; as certainly as he is risen, I am risen with him; and henceforth I shall not serve sin (*ibid.*, p. 353).

"The gospel of Christ . . . is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Romans 1:16). Perhaps the familiar fact of power steering in our cars can help us sense how easy it is to be saved and how hard to be lost. Take a car with power steering and try to steer it when the engine is not running. It is very hard to turn the steering wheel. If it is one of those giant highway trucks, it is practically impossible to turn those huge front wheels unless the engine is providing power to the steering mechanism.

But if the engine is running, then even a child can twist the steering wheel this way or that. The power makes it easy.

But as driver, you must still *choose* which way you want to go. The engine can never relieve you of your ability or of your responsibility to *choose*. You can never sit in your car or your truck, fold your arms, and say, "Take me to the post office." Once you *choose* to turn right or left and apply ever so little effort to turn the wheel, immediately the power mechanism goes to work and makes the task easy.

To those who think they find it hard to be saved, the Lord's servant addresses some helpful counsel:

> Many are inquiring, "*How* am I to make the surrender of myself to God?" You desire to give yourself to Him, but you are weak in moral power, in slavery to doubt, and controlled by the habits of your life of sin. Your promises and resolutions are like ropes of sand. You cannot control your thoughts, your impulses, your affections. The knowledge of

> your broken promises and forfeited pledges weakens your confidence in your own sincerity, and causes you to feel that God cannot accept you; but you need not despair. What you need to understand is the true force of the will. This is the governing power in the nature of man, the power of decision, or of choice. . . . The power of choice God has given to men; it is theirs to exercise. You cannot change your heart, you cannot of yourself give to God its affections; but you can *choose* to serve Him. You can give Him your will; He will then work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. Thus your whole nature will be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ; your affections will be centered upon Him, your thoughts will be in harmony with Him (*Steps to Christ*, p. 47).

Is this Good News message mere quietism, the false heresy that the sinner has nothing to do, just be passive, a glob of putty manipulated by the divine will? Let us look at a statement that some superficially assume contradicts the message of this chapter, but which does not contradict when rightly understood:

> Christ has given us no assurance that to attain perfection of character is an easy matter. A noble, all-round character is not inherited. It does not come to us by accident. A noble character is earned by individual effort through the merits and grace of Christ. God give the talents, the powers of the mind; we form the character. It is formed by hard, stern battles with self. Conflict after conflict must be waged against hereditary tendencies. We shall have to criticize ourselves closely, and allow not one unfavorable trait to remain uncorrected (*Christ's Object Lesson*, p. 331).

Does this nullify the Good News of the grace of Christ? Does it contradict what He said, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light"? There are other statements in Ellen White's writings that some quote in order to oppose the Good News aspect of the 1888 message.*

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*Some of these statements are found in *Messages to Young People*, pp. 99-104; *Prophets and Kings*, p. 84; *Testimonies*, Vol. 2, p. 445; Vol. 4, p. 286. Careful study, however, reveals that there is no conflict. The "strait and

We must never forget that there are indeed hard, stern battles with self, and endless conflicts. But the point of this passage is that our own individual effort is useless apart from the merits and grace of Christ. His cross must never be lost sight of! It actually makes our part easy.

Was His burden light in the Garden of Gethsemane or on His cross? No. His own hard, stern battle with self in Gethsemane and on the cross was so severe that He sweat drops of blood, yes, even His very heart was ruptured in His final agony. What does it mean? Was He telling us a lie when He said, "My burden is light"?

He suffered all that terribly difficult agony in order to save us. The burden He speaks of in Matthew 11:30 is simply His burden that *we* carry. The faith that worketh by love makes it light for us to carry, *for we appreciate the heaviness it was to Him*.

The only difficult thing in being a true Christian is the choice to surrender self to be crucified with Christ. We are never called to be crucified alone—only *with Him*.

But, thank God, it is a million times easier for us to be crucified with Christ than it was for Him to be crucified alone for us! Behold the Lamb of God, and it does indeed become easy.

"When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride."

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narrow way" is not *difficult* necessarily— it is *narrow*, meaning that we cannot carry with us the world's baggage of selfishness. We must indeed "fight the good fight of faith," but it is precisely that—a fight of *faith*. We must continually "strive" and "pray without ceasing"; but we must also breathe without ceasing if we would live physically; but is that "difficult"? And we must eat, probably several times daily, as long as we expect to live—is that "difficult"? A healthy person breathes, "stretches" every muscle as a Christian "stretches every nerve," eats, and finds the constant exercise and activity to be joyous, much more so than being inert or inactive.

Even if this still seems hard, don't ever forget that it remains *much* harder to go on fighting against love like that and beating off the persistent ministry of the Holy Spirit, in order to be lost!

Chapter 10

The Cleansing of the Sanctuary and the 1888 Message

The cleansing of the sanctuary in relation to justification by faith can hardly be overemphasized. Yet we find a strange neglect of this truth. Many hardly have an intelligent idea as to what the cleansing of the sanctuary is all about.

We must have a clear understanding of this all-important truth in order to endure the trials of the last days.

The subject of the sanctuary and the investigative judgment should be clearly understood by the people of God. All need a knowledge for themselves of the position and work of their great High Priest. Otherwise it will be impossible for them to exercise the faith which is essential at this time or to occupy the position which God designs them to fill. . . .

The sanctuary in heaven is the very center of Christ's work in behalf of men [justification by faith]. It concerns every soul living upon the earth. It opens to view the plan of redemption, bringing us down to the very close of time and revealing the triumphant issue of the contest between righteousness and sin (*The Great Controversy,* p. 488).

Further, this great sanctuary truth is the foundation of the Seventh-day Adventist message. A few striking statements found in *Evangelism* will help make this clear.

> The correct understanding of the ministration in the heavenly sanctuary is the foundation of our faith (p. 221).
>
> The subject of the sanctuary was the key which unlocked the mystery of the disappointment of 1844. It opened to

> view a complete system of truth, connected and harmonious, showing that God's hand had directed the great advent movement, and revealing present duty as it brought to light the position and work of His people (p. 222).
>
> God's people are now to have their eyes fixed on the heavenly sanctuary, where the final ministration of our great High Priest in the work of the judgment is going forward—where He is interceding for His people (p. 223).

If we know anything at all as to how Satan works, we can expect that he will direct his most subtle, yet sophisticated, opposition against this unique truth of the cleansing of the sanctuary.

> In the future, deception of every kind is to arise, and we want solid ground for our feet. . . . The enemy will bring in false theories, such as the doctrine that there is no sanctuary. This is one of the points on which there will be a departing from the faith. . . .
>
> The time is near when the deceptive powers of satanic agencies will be fully developed. On one side is Christ, who has been given all power in heaven and earth. On the other side is Satan, continually exercising his power to allure, to deceive with strong, spiritualistic sophistries, to remove God out of the places that He should occupy in the minds of men.
>
> Satan is striving continually to bring in fanciful suppositions in regard to the sanctuary, degrading the wonderful representations of God and the ministry of Christ for our salvation into something that suits the carnal mind. *He removes its presiding power from the hearts of believers,* and supplies its place with fantastic theories invented to make void the truths of the atonement, and destroy our confidence in the doctrines which we have held sacred since the third angel's message was first given. Thus he would rob us of our faith in the very message that has made us a separate people, and has given character and power to our work (*ibid.*, pp. 224, 225, emphasis supplied).

The 1888 message renewed the interest of the people in this closing ministry of our great High Priest and *restored* its presiding power in the *hearts* of believers. As is well known, the message was largely rejected, or at least sadly neglected. But

this fact and its consequences should not lead us to overlook the place of the sanctuary truth in the message itself. Ellen White caught this significance. Having experienced personally the thrill of anticipating the coming of Christ in the 1844 movement, she never lost that first love. She almost intuitively recognized the Good News in the 1888 message that announced to the waiting heart, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh!" She heard the welcome tread of divine footsteps that but few of her contemporaries had ears to hear.

That new development was the joining of the Adventist truth of the cleansing of the sanctuary with a more complete revelation of justification by faith. It was like the confluence of two rivers that had flowed separately but now joined to produce a tide that could bear the ship on its way to port. She saw in the message the glorious means of divine grace provided to make a people ready for the coming of the Lord. She was excited. She recognized that "union with Christ" meant *union with Him in His closing work of atonement,* in clear distinction from His work in the first apartment, where the door was now shut (cf. *Early Writings,* pp. 55, 56, 260, 261).

In a series of articles written shortly after the 1888 Conference, she reveals week by week through her repetition and emphasis how deeply impressed she was. The message of Jones and Waggoner had to do with the reality of the sanctuary truth. Note the week-by-week crescendo:

> We are in the day of atonement, and we are to work in harmony with Christ's work of cleansing the sanctuary from the sins of the people. Let no man who desires to be found with the wedding garment on, resist our Lord in his office work. As he is, so will his followers be in this world. We must now set before the people the work which by faith we see our great High-priest accomplishing in the heavenly sanctuary (*Review and Herald,* January 21, 1890).
>
> Christ is in the heavenly sanctuary, and he is there to make an atonement for the people. . . . He is cleansing the sanctuary from the sins of the people. What is our work?—It is our work to be in harmony with the work of Christ. By faith we are to work with him, to be in union with him. . . .

A people is to be prepared for the great day of God (*ibid.*, January 28, 1890).

The mediatorial work of Christ, the grand and holy mysteries of redemption, are not studied or comprehended by the people who claim to have light in advance of every other people on the face of the earth (*ibid.*, February 4, 1890).

Christ is cleansing the temple in heaven from the sins of the people, and we must work in harmony with him upon the earth, cleansing the soul temple from its moral defilement (*ibid.*, February 11, 1890).

The people have not entered into the holy place [most holy], where Jesus has gone to make an atonement for his children. We need the Holy Spirit in order to understand the truths for this time; but there is spiritual drought in the churches (*ibid.*, February 25, 1890).

Light is flashing from the throne of God, and what is this for?—It is that a people may be prepared to stand in the day of God (*ibid.*, March 4, 1890).

We have been hearing his voice more distinctly in the message that has been going for the last two years, declaring unto us the Father's name. . . . We have only just begun to get a little glimmering of what faith is (*ibid.*, March 11, 1890).

You have been having light from heaven for the past year and a half, that the Lord would have you bring into your character and weave into your experience. . . .

If our brethren were all laborers together with God, they would not doubt but that the message he has sent us during these last two years is from heaven. . . .

Suppose that you blot out the testimony that has been going during these last two years proclaiming the righteousness of Christ, who can you point to as bringing out special light for the people? (*ibid.*, March 18, 1890).

The Jones-Waggoner message riveted attention on the *practical* aspects of Christ's high priestly ministry. This is where those two great rivers, the sanctuary truth and justification by faith, joined together. Jones saw the relationship clearly. The message not only called for holy living, it also provided the means:

This cleansing of the sanctuary [in the typical service] was the taking out of and away from the sanctuary all "the

uncleanness of the children of Israel" "because of their transgressions in all their sins," which, by the ministry of the priesthood in the sanctuary had been brought into the sanctuary during the service of the year.

The finishing of this work of the sanctuary and for the sanctuary was, likewise, the finishing of the work *for the people*. . . . The cleansing of the sanctuary extended to *the people*, and included *the people*, as truly as it did the sanctuary itself. . . .

And that *cleansing* of the sanctuary was a figure of the true, which is the cleansing of the sanctuary and the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man, from all the uncleanness of the believers in Jesus because of all their transgressions in all their sins. And the *time* of this cleansing of the true is declared in the words of the Wonderful Numberer to be "unto two thousand and three hundred days," . . . in A.D. 1844. . . .

This is done in the cleansing of the true sanctuary, only in the finishing of transgression and making an end of sins in the *perfecting* of the believers in Jesus, on the one hand; and on the other hand in the finishing of transgression and making an end of sins in *the destruction of the wicked* and the cleansing of the universe from all taint of sin that has ever been upon it.

The finishing of the mystery of God is the ending of the work of the gospel. And the ending of the work of the gospel is, *first, the taking away of all vestige of sin* and the bringing in of everlasting righteousness—Christ fully formed—within each believer, God alone manifest in the flesh of each believer in Jesus; and, *secondly*, on the other hand, the work of the gospel being finished means only the destruction of all who then shall not have received the gospel (2 Thess. 1:7-10); for it is not the way of the Lord to continue men in life when the only possible use they will make of life is to heap up more misery for themselves. . . .

The service in the earthly sanctuary shows also that in order for the sanctuary to be cleansed and the course of the gospel service there to be finished, it must first be finished *in the people* who have a part in the service. That is to say: In the sanctuary itself, transgression could not be finished, an end of sins and reconciliation for iniquity could not be made, . . . until all this had been accomplished *in each person* who had a part in the service of the sanctuary. The

> sanctuary itself could not be cleansed until each of the worshipers had been cleansed. The sanctuary itself could not be cleansed so long as, *by the confessions of the people and the intercessions of the priests,* there was pouring into the sanctuary a stream of iniquities, transgressions, and sins. . . . This stream must be stopped at its fountain in the hearts and lives of the worshipers, before the sanctuary itself could possibly be cleansed.
>
> Therefore the very first work in the cleansing of the sanctuary was the cleansing of the people. . . .
>
> And this is the very object of the true priesthood in the true sanctuary. . . . The sacrifice, the priesthood, and the ministry of Christ in the true sanctuary does take away sins forever, does make the comers thereunto *perfect,* does *perfect "for ever* them that are sanctified" (Jones, *The Consecrated Way,* pp. 113-119).

The Jones-Waggoner message clearly recognized that the forgiveness of sins is a judicial declaration that rests solely on the atonement made at the cross. It has an objective foundation. But they also saw that the Bible word for *forgive* means an actual "taking away" of the sin. Thus, from the time of the 1888 Conference they recognized the important distinction between the daily or continual ministry in the sanctuary and the yearly, between the *forgiveness* of sins and the *blotting out* of sins. Written soon after the Minneapolis Conference, the following expresses Waggoner's views:

> When Christ covers us with the robe of His own righteousness, He does not furnish a cloak for sin, but takes the sin away. And this shows that the forgiveness of sins is something more than a mere form, something more than a mere entry in the books of record in heaven, to the effect that the sin has been canceled. The forgiveness of sins is a reality; it is something tangible, something that vitally affects the individual. It actually clears him from guilt; and if he is cleared from guilt, is justified, made righteous, he has certainly undergone a radical change. He is, indeed, another person (*Christ and His Righteousness,* p. 66).

The blotting out of sins as the culmination of Christ's closing High Priestly ministry is emphatically taught in the spirit of prophecy:

> For eighteen centuries this work of ministration continued in the first apartment of the [heavenly] sanctuary. The blood of Christ, pleaded in behalf of penitent believers, secured their pardon and acceptance with the Father, yet their sins still remained upon the books of record. As in the typical service there was a work of atonement at the close of the year, so before Christ's work for the redemption of men is completed there is a work of atonement for the removal of sin from the sanctuary. . . .
>
> As the typical cleansing of the earthly was accomplished by the removal of the sins by which . . . [the earthly sanctuary] had been polluted, so the actual cleansing of the heavenly is to be accomplished by the removal, or blotting out, of the sins which are there recorded. But before this can be accomplished, there must be an examination of the books of record to determine who, through repentance of sin and faith in Christ, are entitled to the benefits of His atonement (*The Great Controversy,* pp. 421, 422).
>
> Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. Their robes must be spotless, their characters must be purified from sin by the blood of sprinkling. . . . *While* the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God's people *upon earth.* This work is more clearly presented in the messages of Revelation 14 (*ibid.,* p. 425, emphasis added).

This is the heart of Seventh-day Adventism! Our friends in the evangelical churches would not consider it dry, stale, or profitless, if we ourselves understood its practical meaning. This is what Jones and Waggoner *began* to see.

Waggoner rightly discerned that there is no way that the record of our sins could be blotted out of the books in heaven unless first of all the sin itself is blotted out of the human heart. This was not "internalizing" the doctrine; it was *practicalizing* it in the way that *The Great Controversy* emphasized. Doubtless the above statement from Ellen White strengthened his convictions. In 1902 he published an article in the *Review and Herald* enlarging this insight. (Documentation exists to indi-

cate that at this time he still taught the sanctuary truth as Seventh-day Adventists had always believed. See note at end of chapter.)

> Though all the record of all our sin, even though written with the finger of God, were erased, the sin would remain, because the sin is in us. Though the record of our sin were graven in the rock, and the rock should be ground to powder—even this would not blot out our sin.
>
> The blotting out of sin is the erasing of it from nature, the being of man. [From other statements made in 1901 it is plain he does not mean the eradication of the sinful nature.*]
>
> The erasing of sin is the blotting of it from our natures, so that we shall know it no more. "The worshippers once purged [Hebrews 10:2]"—actually purged by the blood of Christ—have "no more conscience of sins," because the way of sin is gone from them. Their iniquity may be sought for, but it will not be found. It is forever gone from them—it is foreign to their new natures, and even though they may be able to recall the fact that they have committed certain sins, they have forgotten the sin itself—they do not think of doing it any more. This is the work of Christ in the true sanctuary (September 30, 1902).

Did Ellen White agree with this concept? The following was written during the 1890s:

> Forgiveness has a broader meaning than many suppose. . . . God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free form condemnation. It is not only forgiveness *for* sin, but reclaiming *from* sin. It is the outflow of redeem-

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*Waggoner does not mean the eradication of the sinful nature (perfectionism), for he taught the following at the 1901 General Conference session: "Now, do not get a mistaken idea. Do not get the idea that you and I are ever going to be so good that we can live independently of the Lord; do not think that this body is going to be converted. If you do, you will get into grave trouble and gross sin. Do not think that you can make corruption incorruption. This corruption will put on incorruption when the Lord comes; not before. This mortal will put on immortality when the Lord comes; and not till then. When men get the idea that their flesh is sinless, and that all their impulses are from God, they are confounding their sinful flesh with the Spirit of God" (*Bulletin*, p. 146).

ing love that transforms the heart (*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing,* p. 114).

We should note carefully that Jones and Waggoner did not teach that the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary is equivalent to or consists only of the cleansing of the hearts of God's people. They fully recognized that there is a true tabernacle in heaven, as the pioneer Seventh-day Adventists believed. Their expressions of their faith fully agreed with *The Great Controversy* expression, that "*while* the investigative judgment is going forward in heaven, *while* the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, *among God's people on earth*" (p. 425, emphasis added). In other words, the cleansing of the hearts of God's people on earth is parallel to and complementary with the work of their High Priest in heaven. They *cooperate* in harmony with Him. Here is Waggoner's clear statement, published in 1900 in England:

> That God has a sanctuary in the heavens, and that Christ is priest there, cannot be doubted by anyone who reads the Scriptures. . . . Therefore it follows that the cleansing of the sanctuary—a work which is set forth in the Scriptures as immediately preceding the coming of the Lord—*is coincident with* complete cleansing of the people of God on this earth, and preparing them for translation when the Lord comes. . . .
>
> The life [character] of Jesus is to be perfectly reproduced in His followers, not for a day merely, but for all time and for eternity (*The Everlasting Covenant,* pp. 365-367, emphasis added).

Waggoner is writing for non-Adventists, seeking to make plain the practical basis of this unique Adventist doctrine. There is no difference *in principle* between the forgiveness of sins in the daily service and blotting out of sins in the yearly, any more than there is a difference in the essential quality of the water itself that falls in the former rain and that which falls in the latter rain. Both the forgiveness and the blotting out of sins are by the blood of Jesus spilled at the cross of Calvary.

But the typical service of the earthly sanctuary clearly taught that forgiveness can conceivably be rejected by the forgiven sinner and the sin reactivated in the life. And sin may lie much deeper than we are aware, so that temptations or trials of greater intensity could cause us to fall. An example is the mark of the beast. There must therefore come at last a sealing, from which there will never be a turning away. This is equivalent to the blotting out of sins, a preparation for the coming of Jesus.

As we saw in our previous chapter, no one will ever *claim* such a sealing or blotting out, nor even be conscious of it. The closer the believer comes to Christ, the more sinful and unworthy he feels himself to be. But nonetheless, the High Priest is accomplishing His purpose in those who do not resist Him in His office work.

Waggoner continues explaining the doctrine to non-Adventists in Britain:

> We have not time or space here to enter into details, but it must suffice to say that a comparison of Dan. 9:24-26 with Ezra 7 shows that the days mentioned in the prophecy began 457 B.C., and so reach to 1844 A.D. . . . But some one will ask: What connection has 1844 with the blood of Christ, and that blood is no more efficient at one time than another, how can it be said that at a certain time the sanctuary shall be cleansed? Has not the blood of Christ continually been cleansing the living sanctuary, the church? The reply is, that there is such a thing as "the time of the end." Sin must have an end, and work of cleansing will one day be complete. . . . Now it is a fact that since the middle of the last century new light has shone forth, and truth of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus is revealed as never before, and the loud cry of the message, "Behold your God!" is being proclaimed (British *Present Truth,* May 23, 1901, p. 324).

Sometimes a man's teachings can be more clearly reflected by those who have heard him and accepted, than in his own words. Let us see how this subject was understood by W. W. Prescott at about this same time:

> There is a difference between the forgiveness of sins and the blotting out of sin. There is a difference between the gospel being preached for the forgiveness of sins and the gospel being preached for the blotting out of sin. Always, and to-day, there is abundant provision for the forgiveness of sins. In our generation comes the provision for the blotting out of sin. And the blotting out of sin is what will prepare the way for the coming of the Lord; and the blotting out of sin is the ministry of our high Priest in the most holy place in the heavenly sanctuary; and it makes a difference to the people of God to-day in their ministry, in their message, and in their experience, whether they recognize . . . or . . . experience the fact of the change. . . . That should be distinctly brought out in the third angel's message; and with that, of course, will come the clearest revelation of the gospel ministry for this time, the blotting out of sin in this generation, thus preparing the way of the Lord (*General Conference Bulletin,* 1903, pp. 53, 54).

Prescott learned this unique concept from Jones, who taught it in 1893 as follows:

> Then, when we as a people, we as a body, we as a church, have received the blessing of Abraham, what then? . . . The outpouring of the Spirit. It is so with the individual. When the individual believes in Jesus Christ, and obtains the righteousness which is by faith, then the Holy Spirit, which is the circumcision of the heart, is received by him. And when the whole people, as a church, receive the righteousness of faith, the blessing of Abraham, then what is to hinder the church from receiving the Spirit of God? [Congregation: "Nothing."] That is where we are. . . . What holds back the outpouring of the Holy Ghost? [Voice: "Unbelief."] (*General Conference Bulletin,* 1893, p. 383).

Does Ellen White clearly support this understanding of the significance of the cleansing of the sanctuary? At the very beginning of Seventh-day Adventist history she made some statements that are perhaps more startling to us today than they were to her generation. We have yet to appreciate their profound import. She is describing the change of Christ's ministry from the first to the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, in 1844.

> There I beheld Jesus, a great High Priest, standing before the Father. . . . Those who rose up with Jesus [that is, following Him by faith] would send up their faith to Him in the holiest, and pray, "My Father, give us Thy Spirit." Then Jesus would breathe upon them the Holy Ghost. In that breath was light, power, and much love, joy, and peace (*Early Writings*, p. 55).

If it is true that "Babylon the great is fallen," then it is very obvious that the only possible source of that true love must be the ministry of Christ in the most holy apartment. And those professed Christians who have refused to follow Him by faith must be destitute of the true Holy Spirit. This is what she says farther on:

> I turned to look at the company who were still bowed before the throne [that is, still praying to Christ in the first apartment]; they did not know that Jesus had left it. Satan appeared to be by the throne, trying to carry on the work of God. I saw them look up to the throne, and pray, "Father, give us Thy Spirit." Satan would then breathe upon them an unholy influence; in it there was light and much power, but no sweet love, joy, and peace (*ibid.*, p. 56).

Do these words mean what they say? If they do, the terrible reality emerges of a determined, clever enemy of all truth perpetrating upon professed Christians of our generation the most clever yet terrible deception of his thousands of years of experience. And the only possible safeguard against being deceived is a correct understanding of the cleansing of the sanctuary and ministry of Christ.

Again in *Early Writings* the Lord's servant describes the nature and extent of popular but false teachings of righteousness by faith that come through failure to understand Christ's true ministry in the most holy place:

> I saw that as the Jews crucified Jesus, so the nominal churches had crucified these [three angels'] messages, and therefore they have no knowledge of the way into the most holy [apartment], and they cannot be benefited by the intercession of Jesus there. Like the Jews, who offered their

> useless sacrifices, they offer up their useless prayers to the apartment which Jesus has left; and Satan, pleased with the deception, assumes a religious character, and leads the minds of these professed Christians to himself, working with his power, his signs and lying wonders, to fasten them in his snare. . . . He also comes as an angel of light and spreads his influence over the land by means of false reformations. The churches are elated, and consider that God is working marvelously for them, when it is the work of another spirit. . . .
>
> I saw that God has honest children among the nominal Adventists [those who believe in the second coming of Christ but do not understand the sanctuary truth] and the fallen churches, and before the plagues shall be poured out, ministers and people will be called out from these churches and will gladly receive the truth. Satan knows this; and before the loud cry of the third angel is given, he raises an excitement in these religious bodies, that those who have rejected the truth may think that God is with them. He hopes to deceive the honest and lead them to think that God is still working for the churches. But the light will shine, and all who are honest will leave the fallen churches, and take their stand with the remnant (p. 261).

Who is the spirit spoken of as another spirit? It is obviously a counterfeit spirit, cleverly designed to resemble the genuine and if possible to deceive the honest. The mark of the beast will not be a crude, obvious deception! It will include a plastic, counterfeit justification by faith.

Preparation for the coming of Christ involves learning to know Him so intimately that deception will be impossible. This suggests the intimacy of marriage, and love that makes such a relationship possible. The following are thoughts that Jones held in the 1890s. Though published first in *Review and Herald* articles in the late years of the decade, they represent convictions that he held much earlier. This was an essential of the 1888 message:

> When Jesus comes, it is to take His people unto Himself. It is to present to Himself His glorious church, "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," but that is "holy and

without blemish." It is to see Himself perfectly reflected in all His saints.

And *before* He comes thus, His people must be in that condition. Before He comes we must have been brought to that state of perfection in the complete image of Jesus. Eph. 4:7, 8, 11-13. And this state of perfection, this developing in each believer the complete image of Jesus—this is the finishing of the mystery of God, which is Christ in you the hope of glory. This consummation is accomplished in the cleansing of the sanctuary. . . .

And the blotting out of sins is exactly this thing of the cleansing of the sanctuary; it is the finishing of all transgression in our lives; it is the making an end of all sins in our character; it is the bringing in of the very righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ. . . .

Therefore now as never before, we are to repent and be converted, that our sins may be blotted out, that an utter end shall be made of them forever in our lives (*The Consecrated Way,* pp. 123-125).

Let us see this thought in Jones's sermons delivered at the 1893 session, sermons that Ellen White said should be republished (Letter 230, 1908):

"Those who bear every test have heeded the testimony of the True Witness, and will receive the latter rain that they may be translated." [He was loosely paraphrasing what he had earlier read from *Testimonies,* Vol. 1, p. 187.] Brethren, is there not a lot of good cheer in the thought that it is for that, that the latter rain is to prepare for translation? . . . And when he comes and speaks to you and me, it is because he wants to translate us, but he cannot translate sin, can he? Then, the only purpose that he has in showing us the depth and breadth of sin, is that he may save us from it and translate us (*General Conference Bulletin,* 1893, p. 205).

I have wondered lately whether that is not intentional that it is put in that way, that the mystery of God *should* be finished, instead of *shall* be finished. It should have been finished long ago. . . . What is that? "Christ in you the hope of glory" (*ibid.,* p. 150).

If you are in any way connected with this world in spirit, in mind, in thought, in wishes, in inclinations, . . . a hair's breadth, a connection with the world as thin as a hair, will

rob you of the power that there must be in this call that will warn the world against this evil power [the beast and his image] of the world, so that they shall be utterly separated from it (*ibid.*, p. 123).

Brethren, he is a glorious salvation to those who are free from iniquity. Let him cleanse us from iniquity now, that when his glory appears we will not be consumed, but changed into his glorious likeness itself. That is what he wants (*ibid.*, p. 115).

Brethren, we are in the grandest time this world ever saw. Oh, that we may consecrate ourselves to God as becomes us who are living in this grandest of times! . . . I tell you, brethren, the power of God is going to do something right away. Oh, that we may surrender all things to him that he may! (*ibid.*, pp. 111, 112).

It is a fearful position. It brings us to the point of such consecration as not a soul of us ever dreamed of before; unto the place of such consecration, of such devotion, as will hold ourselves in the presence of God, with that fearful thought that "It is time for thee, Lord, to work, for they have made void thy law." . . .

Brethren, there is that fearful word also that touches that very thought, that came to us from Australia. . . . "Something great and decisive is to take place, and that right early. If any delay, the character of God and his throne will be compromised." Brethren, by our careless, indifferent attitude, we are putting God's throne into jeopardy (*ibid.*, p. 73).

Part of that most precious message was this larger concern for the honor of Christ. The closer one comes to the cross of Christ, the less he worries about his own security. He will be caught up in a grand concern for the triumphant close of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. Waggoner also had the same idea:

"That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged" [Romans 3:4]. God is now accused by Satan of injustice and indifference, and even of cruelty. Thousands of men have echoed the charge. But the judgment will declare the righteousness of God. His character, as well as that of man, is on trial. In the judgment every act, both of God and man, that has been

> done since creation will be seen by all in all its bearings. And when everything is seen in that perfect light, God will be acquitted of all wrongdoing, even by his enemies (*Signs of the Times,* January 9, 1896).

This is the first angel's message. The honor of God is truly involved in the character of His people. And no motivation possible can lead *His* people to overcome selfishness and sin except a concern for *His* honor and the integrity of *His* throne. *But this motivation is all-powerful.* It is New Testament faith!

The second coming of Christ is the ultimate validation of the Seventh-day Adventist message. Our very name expresses our confidence in it. If Christ should never return, we have had no reason for existence as a people. And even if His coming is certain, but is to be delayed for many decades or even centuries, we still have no reason to exist, for we have said repeatedly that His coming is *near,* because He has said so. Not *our* honor, but *His* is at stake. Who can welcome a dishonest Saviour?

Can His people hasten or delay His coming? All too common is the idea that the sovereign will of God has predetermined its exact time irrevocably, as a peg fixed in the mechanism of a time clock. When the peg finally strikes the gong the curtain will fall on history, and the Lord will return. All we have to do is play the waiting and watching game, keeping a wary eye on the signs while we try to make the best of both worlds. This widely prevalent view of the Second Coming is thoroughly egocentric and can produce nothing but continued lukewarmness. Christ says His coming is near; can we trust what He says?

The 1888 message introduced a refreshingly different view. It was a revival of that deep heartfelt love for Christ that motivated the participants in the midnight cry of 1844. Students at South Lancaster partook of that spirit in the meetings that followed the 1888 Conference. "Nearly every student was swept in by the heavenly current, and living testimonies were given that were not surpassed even by the testimonies of 1844

before the disappointment" (*Review and Herald,* March 4, 1890). With a spirit like that, we *want* the Lord to come soon. And He will come as soon as His people want Him to come. Says Ellen White:

> "When the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come" (Mark 4:29). Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.
>
> It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (*Christ's Object Lessons,* p. 69).

What is *your* heart-response? Do you say with the apostle, " 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus' "?

NOTE:

Certain factors are important in considering Waggoner's relationship to the historic Seventh-day Adventist doctrine of the sanctuary and its cleansing:

1. The charge is sometimes brought that Waggoner made a serious mistake in relating the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary to the cleansing of the hearts of God's people on earth, that this is internalizing an objective truth. It is not true that Waggoner (or Jones) *limited* the cleansing of the sanctuary to this work in the hearts of God's people. Waggoner spoke of the objective work of cleansing the heavenly sanctuary as "coincident with" the heart-cleansing work (cf. *The Everlasting Covenant,* pp. 366, 367). This could not be a mistaken position, for Ellen White also related the work in the heavenly sanctuary to the cleansing of the hearts of God's people, as quotations in this chapter indicate. The word *internalize,* borrowed from Roman Catholic mysticism, has nothing to do with Biblical concepts of finishing "the mystery of God" (Revelation 10:7), which is "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). To internalize such a doctrine would re-

quire degrading it to a purely egocentric concern, the opposite of Jones's and Waggoner's viewpoint.

2. Waggoner's last letter of May 28, 1916, is sometimes cited in order to disparage his teachings about the cleansing of the sanctuary. He says in 1916 that he virtually abandoned the orthodox Seventh-day Adventist view of the sanctuary "twenty-five years" earlier, which would have been 1891. But that which proves too much proves nothing. The following need to be considered:

a. Not a line exists of Waggoner's writings between 1891 and 1902 to indicate that he had either abandoned or disparaged the sanctuary doctrine.

b. Between 1891 and 1896 we find numerous ongoing endorsements from the pen of Ellen White concerning his message. There is not a hint that he was then departing from the faith on this vital doctrine. Knowing her great concern, it seems unthinkable that one who exercised the prophetic gift would fail to discern such a radical departure from the message.

c. To accept at face value Waggoner's probably unedited 1916 statement brings us into very difficult problems (a fatal heart attack prevented Waggoner from personally mailing the letter to Elder M. C. Wilcox). It would require that we consider Waggoner a dishonest hypocrite from 1891 to 1902, because documentary evidence proves that he taught the sanctuary doctrine publicly and forcefully during that time. (See, for example, the British *Present Truth*, May 23, 1901.) Would this not be going much too far, in view of Ellen White's endorsements and the overall impact of his lifework in the years of his prime?

3. Reason compels us to the conclusion that Waggoner was mistaken in his 1916 letter, rather than his being a craven hypocrite during the years when Ellen White supported him so enthusiastically. In 1916 he was an embittered, defeated, confused man. The years of enduring loneliness and opposition from his brethren had taken a toll on him. Because his

message was "in a great degree" rejected by his brethren (cf. *Selected Messages,* Book One, pp. 234, 235), Waggoner was never able to get beyond that beginning of the latter rain and the loud cry. He was never able to satisfy his soul hunger for a better understanding of the significance of the Adventist doctrine of the cleansing of the sanctuary.

What he should have said in 1916 was that as early as 1891 he began to be *tempted* to doubt the doctrine. But it is hardly fair to say that he yielded to this temptation while he was publicly teaching it. His characteristic openness and frankness indicate otherwise than such dishonesty on his part.

At the General Conference Session held in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in 1888, Elders A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner presented a message of justification by faith that proved to be highly controversial. Many of the delegates found the message unwelcome.

However, Ellen White called it "a most precious message . . . which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in large measure."

For decades Seventh-day Adventists have been fascinated by the message presented in 1888, but for most a mystery has surrounded it. Robert Wieland, who has studied the 1888 message for more than forty years, now introduces the reader to the actual message. His work is carefully documented for the scholar, yet is written in a style that can be easily understood by a layman. Some of the chapter titles include "Justification by Faith as Understood by the 1888 Messengers," "Sinless Living: Possible or Not?" and "Why It's Easy to Be Saved, and Hard to Be Lost (or Is It Vice Versa?)."

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